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ESSAYS AND LECTURES.

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ESSAYS AND LECTURES

ON

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SUBJECTS.

BY

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PREFACE.

In the following pages my wife and I have collected some of the Essays and Lectures written or spoken by us within the last three or four years. Three of my Lectures, viz. those on "Modern Socialism," "The General Aspects of State Intervention," and "The Regulation of Hours of Labour by the State," formed the first part of a course which I delivered in the University of Cambridge in the Lent Term, 1872, on the Programme of the International Society economically considered. These Lectures have never before appeared in print. Two of my wife's Lectures, "Why Women require the Suffrage," and "The Education of Women," have also never been published. The other contents of the Volume have appeared from time to time in various journals and periodicals. We have, however, in some instances added a Postscript when recent events, bearing on the subject of the paper, seemed to make such an addition desirable. Each Essay and Lecture is signed

with the initials of its author. We have endeavoured, as far as possible, to group the contents of the Volume according to the subjects of the papers. It was not easy in all instances to define the line of demarcation between economic, social, and political matters; but it will be found, speaking generally, that the first part of the Volume treats of economic subjects, the second of education, and the third of politics.

I wish to add that the labour involved in editing the Volume has fallen entirely on my wife.

HENRY FAWCETT.

March, 1872.

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ESSAYS AND LECTURES.

I.

MODERN SOCIALISM.

It is each day becoming more evident that in every European country an increasing number of the labouring population are giving an enthusiastic adherence to certain Social and Economic principles, which, if carried into effect, will introduce even more fundamental changes than those brought about by the first French Revolution. Never, perhaps, was there a time when it was more important to dispassionately consider the ideas, the wants, and the aspirations of the workmen who are engaged in this movement, which may be described under the general title of Modern Socialism. Without such dispassionate consideration there is certain to arise, instead of a kindly and intelligent sympathy, the rancorous enmity of bitter class prejudice. Those who are prepared to show this sympathy may have some chance of directing to purposes of inestimable good this new movement, which, if met with blind and unreasoning opposition, will at last gradually gather so much

strength as to pass beyond control; Europe may then find herself involved in a terrible war of classes. It has been repeatedly shown that the friends of revolutionary changes derive their motive power from the bigoted opponents of progress, and from the stubborn upholders of unwise laws and unjust privileges. It might as well be supposed that the railway engine would move if it were deprived of steam, that wheat could grow without soil, or that man could live without food, as to imagine that a revolutionary propagandism could be maintained if it were not kept alive by the recollection of some wrong inflicted, and by the continuance of some grievance unredressed. It is perfectly vain to expect that there will not be threatenings of coming convulsions so long as the social and economic condition of great masses of the people remains what it is at the present time. England is constantly being glorified as the wealthiest of all nations. From every platform in the kingdom orators delight to parade the well-known statistics about our vast and growing commerce. Each quarterly return from the Board of Trade shows an augmentation of exports and imports. In spite, however, of all these evidences of accumulating wealth the majority of our people have a severe struggle for existence, and no inconsiderable minority live in abject misery and in degrading poverty. The more wealthy the nation is admitted to be the more perilous does it become, and the more ominous of future trouble that one out of twenty of the nation should be a pauper; that to a great proportion of our labouring classes a life of incessant toil yields no other

result than an old age of dependent mendicancy; that millions are so entirely uneducated as to be cut off from every intellectual enjoyment; that in many rural districts horses are stabled far more comfortably than labourers are housed; and that in our largest and wealthiest cities the poor are so crowded and huddled together, that in a countless number of instances all the members of a family herd together in a single room. Can any one who reflects on such facts be surprised that a widespread spirit of unrest and dissatisfaction is abroad? Ought it not to be regarded as almost incredible that a social structure resting on such a basis should have stood so long? But it may be said that if things are not as rapidly improving as can be desired they are certainly not getting worse. Why then, it is urged, should there be this new outburst of discontent? No new laws vexatious to the industrial classes have been imposed; many, on the contrary, have been repealed; taxation is not more burdensome, and duties on many of the necessaries of life which added greatly to their cost have been remitted. May not it therefore be fairly concluded that things will gradually improve; that the present dissatisfaction is unreasonable, and that the demands of those who are so discontented with society as it is now constituted should be simply met by undeviating resistance?—As there is only too much reason to fear that many will assume this attitude of resistance, it is important to give the most emphatic warning as to the consequences which the adoption of such a policy may involve. As it is so frequently supposed that the movement in favour of organic social and

economic changes has no solid foundation in reason or in justice, and that it is rather a temporary aberration of certain unsettled and mischievous people who love revolution for revolution's sake, it becomes important, in the first instance, to attempt to discover whether this is a true interpretation of the sentiments now widely prevalent among the industrial classes.

As previously remarked, it no doubt, at first sight, appears somewhat difficult to account for the fact that this desire for change should have grown up with the repeal of many unjust laws, with the remission of many burdensome taxes, with a great stimulus in the productive industry of the country, and with the more widespread desire amongst those who are in comfortable circumstances to be good, kind and charitable to the poor. But does not the fact that all these circumstances have been in operation without producing any more marked effect upon the general well-being of the people suggest an explanation of the phenomenon which we are seeking to elucidate? Scarcely any other result can be expected than that there should arise a feeling of angry disappointment, unreasoning distrust, and unjust suspicion when favourable agencies like those just mentioned are contrasted with such facts as those previously enumerated, which are only too truly typical of the social and economic condition of the country. For a long time, the people were led to believe that the elevation of their class would be secured by bringing into operation various favourable material agencies. At one period it was supposed that the application of steam to manufactures, and the improvement of locomotion by

the introduction of railways would so stimulate production as to bring to the labourer an age of golden plenty. At another time it was confidently stated that by the abolition of protection the markets of the world would be thrown open to us, and the supplies of cheap food thus procured would yield an increased store of comfort to every humble home. In one respect these predictions have been fulfilled, in another respect they have been cruelly falsified. Production has been stimulated beyond the expectations of the most sanguine, and supplies of food have been obtained from even the most distant countries in much greater quantities than could have been anticipated. Still, however, so far as the labourer is concerned, the age of golden plenty seems as remote as ever, and in the humble homes of the poor a not less constant war has to be waged against penury and want. From the bitter disappointment thus engendered there has not unnaturally arisen a feeling of deep distrust of the fundamental principles on which society is based. A widespread opinion has grown up that it is no use relying upon the old remedies and the old nostrums. Resort must be had to far more radical changes; the very foundations on which our social system rests must be altered. This feeling of unrest, this desire to do away with the existing order of things, is sure to arise when the mass of the people become dissatisfied with their condition. On many previous occasions they had more reason than now to attribute their misfortunes to political causes. Unjust and vexatious taxation, combined with a reckless expenditure of a profligate and corrupt court, at length accu-

mulated such misery upon the French people that an irresistible movement arose to sweep away every established institution. The first French Revolution ought not consequently to be regarded as an uprising to substitute a Republican for a Monarchical form of government. The people, driven to a frenzy of despair by physical suffering, were not in a frame of mind calmly to reason upon well-devised schemes of relief. They wished to see everything changed, and they consequently waged an unrelenting war with the existing state of things. Again, the revolutionary movement in 1848, although it caused the fall of so many dynasties, was not so much a political as a social and economic movement. The dissatisfaction which prevailed at this period was not mainly due either to unjust laws or vexatious taxation. It was the manifestation of an intense desire fundamentally to change the principles from which the vast industrial system of the present time has been developed. Competition and the separation of capital from labour may be regarded as the most prominent characteristics of modern industry. It might, therefore, have been almost foreseen that these characteristics would be singled out for special reprobation, when the general condition of the industrial classes became unsatisfactory, and the great mass of the people in every country felt that they had to bear an undue amount of suffering, the hardest toil yielding to them a most inadequate share of comfort and enjoyment. There consequently arose a determination to substitute for the industrial system then existing one from which not only competition would be absent, but one in which capital and

labour would be united, instead of being separated by the rivalry of hostile interests. The industrial ideas which were thus sought to be carried into practical effect may be described under the general name of Socialism or Communism. The very mention of these words will no doubt to many minds suggest much that is ominous of danger, and much which is opposed to the well-being of society. Prejudice, however unfounded, often spreads so fast that it becomes most formidable to combat. To many, Socialism and Communism are supposed to be synonymous with confiscation and spoliation. A Socialist exists vaguely in the minds of the comfortable classes as a sort of abandoned creature who wishes to live by robbing other people of their property, and who desires to see general pillage introduced. I shall have frequent occasion in these pages to point out that in the present state of mankind, Socialism would do nothing to increase the well-being of the people, and that the socialistic schemes which have been propounded would inevitably end in disastrous failure. But, although this may be fully proved, yet nothing can be more unjust than to throw aspersions upon the character of the Socialists, and to misinterpret their motives. They no doubt have been mistaken enthusiasts, but it is impossible to deny that their motives have been pure and their aims lofty. They have been animated by a desire which must have been felt by all who are not depraved by selfishness, to lighten poverty, to alleviate human suffering, and to diffuse more general happiness among mankind. The injustice which is so generally done to Socialists will

be perhaps more clearly perceived when attention is directed to the origin of the socialistic sentiment.

It has been often remarked that the more a country advances in wealth, the wider and deeper seems to be the gulf between the rich and the poor. Not only is this shown by the fact that the augmentation in the number of the very wealthy is not accompanied either by a corresponding decrease in the number of the very poor, or by a proportionate diminution of their sufferings; but the separation between classes seems to become intensified in other ways. The time was when those who were engaged in any industry, master, foreman, and workmen, dwelt near to each other, and between them there were often intimate personal relations, which have now completely passed away. Although the introduction of steam and the application of various mechanical inventions have completely revolutionised the conditions on which industry is carried on, yet there has probably been a not less marked change in the social and industrial life of the country. The supplanting of hand-loom weaving and pillow-lace making by vast manufactories filled with complicated and costly machinery does not represent a greater change than that which is indicated by a comparison between the present mode of life of men of business and that which was adopted by them formerly. The merchant and the manufacturer used to reside close to where the daily work of their lives was carried on. Now, however, each year a greater distance separates the homes of the master and his workmen. The West knows nothing of the East, and many who have accumulated princely fortunes seldom go within miles

of the homes of any of their workmen. All these considerations show that the relations between employers and employed have gradually lost their personal character, and have become more and more commercial. This being the case, there can, of course, be little friendship or comradeship; there is too little of that personal sympathy which often arises among those who are the fellow-workers at a common object; but, on the contrary, labour being bought and sold in the same way as any commodity of commerce, the only feelings between employers and employed are too often those which exist between the buyers and sellers of merchandise. It must not, however, be supposed that the present has thus been contrasted with the past with the object of implying that there has been no improvement, nor must it be imagined that it would be desirable to restore a state of things which would, in many respects, be incompatible and incongruous with the requirements of modern times. But being perfectly ready to admit that there has been progress, yet this should not cause us to lose sight of those drawbacks associated with commercial development, which make the present in some of its aspects compare unfavourably with the past. It is, of course, far more prudent carefully to consider these drawbacks with the view of reaching the causes which produce them; for if this cannot be done, if commercial progress is always to be presented to the mass of the people in no other aspect than that in which they now see it, there will certainly arise not only dissatisfaction, but a desire to effect organic changes in the constitution of society. Some idea may be formed of the extent to which discontent

must be engendered, when every workman must be constantly reminded of the fact that whilst numbers are unable to obtain a sufficiency of the necessaries of life, others have so much superfluous wealth that they are able to squander it in useless and mischievous luxuries, and never devote themselves to one hour's useful employment. The more the distance widens between the rich and the poor, the more the belief is certain to gain ground that there is something radically wrong in the laws which regulate the distribution of wealth. It cannot be wise and just, it is plausibly said, that the produce which the earth yields should be so apportioned amongst its inhabitants that, whereas many have far more than they need, others have to endure the bitter pangs of want. It is urged that if there was more equality in this distribution, there would be enough for all; if superfluities were taken away from the rich, and given to the poor, all would then enjoy adequate comfort. Those who are influenced by such ideas as these are at once, by a natural sequence, led to the conclusion that the circumstances which produce inequalities in wealth are chiefly responsible for all the social and economic evils under which a nation suffers. It is consequently proposed that society should be regulated on principles which would, as far as possible, prevent inequalities in wealth. A feeling thus arises in favour of either abolishing, or greatly curtailing the rights of private property. Various schemes have, from time to time, been propounded with the object of giving effect to these ideas. Those who would not shrink from applying what they conceive to be a complete remedy, propose that society

should be reconstituted on an entirely Communistic model; associations being established in which there should be no private property, the wealth produced being the joint property of the community. Others suggest less thorough remedies, and propose that after a due maintenance has been guaranteed to all the members, any surplus which may remain might be appropriated as private property. St Simon and Fourier in France, and Robert Owen in England, have identified their names with these Communistic experiments. It is scarcely necessary to remark that all such attempts have hitherto failed to obtain any practical success. In fact, it is not too much to say that in the present state of mankind failure is inevitable. Men are not yet sufficiently advanced to work with as much zeal for the good of others as for their own advantage. Those who are industrious will not long remain content if they see that a considerable portion of the fruits of their labour is devoted to the support of those who are as well able to work as themselves, but who are so indolent and improvident that they rely upon others for their maintenance.

It must, however, be remembered that such men as St Simon, Fourier, and Owen never proposed the confiscation of other people's property. They always contemplated that their Communistic societies should legitimately acquire the land and other property upon which they first commenced operations. Robert Owen, in fact, purchased an estate in Hampshire for a considerable sum of money, upon which he attempted to give practical effect to his socialistic ideas. Although these schemes have completely failed, yet failure has done little to

weaken the sentiment which gave them birth. The ideas from which they have originated have not been, and probably will not be ever extinguished. Each fruitless endeavour to carry them out not only stimulates a fresh development, but also causes them to assume another form. Unlike the Socialists of former days, those who are at the present time under the influence of the socialistic sentiment are beginning to place their chief reliance upon State intervention. They seem to think that if individual efforts have been unable to achieve success, this provides the most cogent argument in favour of an appeal to the State. This is the reason which induces me to ascribe such grave importance to Modern Socialism. There was no cause to feel alarm or misgiving as long as Socialism simply caused certain experiments to be tried by enthusiasts, against whom no other charge could be brought than that they showed too much zeal in their efforts to improve society. Even their failure did something to benefit mankind. It can scarcely be doubted that in these first socialistic schemes were sown the germs of a social and economic movement which has already effected great good, and which promises more for the future than any other agency yet brought into operation. It is well known that some of those who were the most strongly imbued with the teaching and doctrines of Robert Owen were the founders, and afterwards the managers of our most prosperous cooperative institutions. Cooperation is as yet only in its infancy; it has hitherto been generally applied to the distribution of wealth, but rarely to its production. Enough, however, has been seen of its effects to justify a con-

fident belief that its general adaptation to industrial undertakings would probably mark the greatest advance ever yet made in human improvement. Labour and capital, instead of being hostile interests, will be united, and by this union an incalculable stimulus will be given to production.

The hostility now existing between labour and capital is constantly assuming such serious proportions that it may be regarded as a bitter internecine war, which seems to be waged without truce or cessation; for peace is no sooner made in one locality than the conflict is sure soon to break out again in some other part of the country. Social peace and harmony are thus rendered impossible, and industry has to struggle against as serious impediments as have been created by onerous taxation. No exact estimate can, of course, be made of the sacrifice of national wealth which is caused by these disputes between employers and employed. If labour and capital were cooperated or united, not only would this annual waste of wealth be avoided, but general industrial efficiency would be so much promoted as to diffuse throughout the whole community a prosperity hitherto unknown. Labour and capital working under more favourable conditions, there would be yielded a greater amount of wealth, and consequently those directly engaged in industry might not only receive a larger reward, but commodities might be cheapened, and thus the whole nation would participate in the advantage. Although I believe that this is no exaggerated statement of the benefits which in the future may be conferred by cooperation, yet a very consider-

able time must elapse before these principles can be generally adopted. Those are not true friends of cooperation, but, on the contrary, they probably do more than any to impede its progress, who lose sight of the conditions which its successful application requires. It must be remembered that although the principle is rapidly gaining adherents in this country, it has, up to the present time, scarcely in a single instance been successfully carried out in its highest and most useful form. For instance, by far the most widely known and most prosperous cooperative society in England is that of the Rochdale Pioneers. In this case, however, the principle of cooperation is carried out in a very limited and partial way; it is, in fact, simply applied to the distribution, and not to the production of wealth. The most essential principle in cooperation is the merging or uniting of capital and labour. This is effected by a society of labourers supplying out of their own resources all the fixed and circulating capital which their industry requires. This, for instance, will manifestly take place if the operatives, who work in a cotton mill, own the building, the machinery, plant, etc., and are able to provide themselves with maintenance during the time which must elapse before the products of their industry become marketable.

At the Rochdale store and other similar institutions, there is no such union of labour and capital as that just described. A certain number of people, not necessarily labourers, subscribe a certain sum of money, with which is carried on various ordinary retail trades. These stores may be regarded as joint-stock companies, which distribute the profits realised partly among the customers,

partly among the shareholders. In order to prevent confusion and misconception, it is important that the true character of these cooperative societies should be understood. It must not however for this reason be supposed that it is my intention either to ignore, or, in the slightest degree to disparage the great good which they have already done, and the still greater good which they are yet capable of doing. Without here entering into the subject at greater length, it is sufficient to say that these stores, by enabling unadulterated articles to be purchased at the lowest price, cause a considerable reduction in the expenses of house-keeping. To labourers, and others with small incomes, the saving thus effected is often of the utmost consequence. The stores have generally adopted the rule of refusing credit to their customers; this probably more than any other circumstance has contributed to their success. The refusal of credit, moreover, confers the most signal benefit upon the workmen, for the facility with which they are permitted to get into debt at the ordinary shops powerfully encourages improvidence. Another advantage which is associated with these institutions is that their members acquire by practical experience a knowledge of some of the functions which capital fulfils in industry. Although at the present time there is scarcely a single industrial undertaking conducted upon the true cooperative principle, the labourers being the owners of the whole capital embarked, yet there seems to be good grounds to justify the belief that, in future years, there will be rapid progress towards the general adoption of the cooperative principle. One of the chief circumstances which

has hitherto impeded the spread of cooperation arises from the fact that it requires social and moral qualities which are now not generally possessed by the workmen. Thus the members of a cooperative society must not only have the necessary providence to save the requisite capital, but they must also have the prudence to set aside a considerable portion of the profits which are realised in prosperous years in order to meet adverse times. They must also learn to trust each other; they must have sufficient sagacity to select the best men among themselves to be managers, and when the managers have been appointed their authority must be respected. All this indicates a high intellectual and moral development, which is not likely to be attained until the nation has been brought under the influence of a comprehensive system of education. Then, again, it appears probable that the present disputes between labour and capital will prepare the way for the introduction of cooperation. The loss and suffering, which even a successful strike temporarily entails upon the labourers, are sure to impress them with a desire to change the conditions upon which industry is carried on. This is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that whenever a strike is in progress proposals are certain to emanate from the workmen to take the matter into their own hands by commencing business for themselves. Self-interest will also prompt the employers to exert an influence in a similar direction. Many of them, anxious to avoid the annoyance which they suffer from a dispute with their workmen, have already adopted the principle of copartnership; which, by making the labourer's

remuneration partly depend upon the prosperity of the business, would secure a more complete identity of interest between capital and labour. These co-partnership schemes, which may be regarded as modifications of the cooperative principle, will, by providing admirable training for the workmen, gradually fit them to conduct business operations for themselves. But if all agencies just enumerated are already producing beneficial effects and are likely gradually to bring about a better state of things, what reasonable explanation can be given of the dissatisfaction now prevailing? This question, which has already been asked in these pages, may appear to be the more difficult to answer, if, in addition to other circumstances calculated to improve society, we are able to reckon upon a steady advance towards cooperation. In attempting a solution of this problem we shall be able to obtain a clearer insight into the exact nature of the demands now being put forth with increasing urgency by the working classes.

Until quite recently there was one most marked and important difference between the Continental and the English workman. The former placed his chief reliance on the State, whereas it was the aim of the latter to free himself as much as possible from Government control. One of the first uses which the French workmen made of their success in the Revolution of 1848, was to compel the Government to establish national workshops, and to advance loans to cooperative associations. One of the first things which the English workmen did, when they obtained political power by the Reform Bill of 1867, was to call upon

Parliament to repeal all the laws which interfered with the formation of voluntary trade combinations. The Continental workman was constantly looking to the State as he would to a powerful friend or benefactor to aid and reward him. The attitude of the English workman has, until recently, been one rather of hostility towards the State. His habit has been to claim freedom from Government control, so that he might have a free and open field for the exercise of his energies. This difference, however, between English and Continental labourers is becoming less marked. It can scarcely have escaped notice that during the last two or three years English workmen have with much greater frequency asked for Government assistance; and the demands for State intervention are constantly enlarging. There are many circumstances which have contributed to bring about this change. In the first place, it is probable, as previously indicated, that the growing tendency shown by so many of our artisans to rely upon the State may be traced to the false hopes excited, some years since, by those who taught the people to believe that the great end to be striven after was a larger production of wealth. This augmented production of wealth has taken place, and when it is found to be unaccompanied by the predicted improvement in the condition of the poor, there is naturally aroused keen disappointment, and there is diffused through the industrial classes a general feeling of distrust. They get into just that frame of mind which causes them to give a ready acceptance to any doctrines differing from those by which they suppose they have been

deceived. The opinions in favour of State intervention so current among Continental workmen now consequently find a more ready acceptance in this country; these opinions are, in fact, transplanted to our shores under such favourable circumstances that, for a time at least, they seem to have taken root among us.

Many other causes have indirectly promoted the assimilation of ideas that has been just described. Some influence has, for instance, been undoubtedly exercised by facilities of communication, which steamboats and railways have introduced. It was formerly far more rare than it is now for an English artisan to visit the Continent, or for a Continental artisan to visit England. Ideas, consequently, now much more readily circulate, and are much more frequently interchanged. It has, moreover, been the policy of the more enlightened European countries to encourage an international spirit. This has been one of the objects of those Exhibitions of Arts and Manufactures which, during the last twenty years, have been often held in various European capitals. Visits of foreign workmen to these Exhibitions have frequently been organized by governments and by private societies. Considering the terror which is now being inspired by the Society known as the Workmen's International Association, it is somewhat curious to discover that this Association had its origin in the fact that some French workmen were deputed by their Government to visit the London Exhibition of 1862. The fraternization which then took place between them and some London artisans, suggested the idea that the workmen of different countries should be more closely united by

the bonds of a common industrial interest, and this led to the formation of the International Association.

Again it is to be remarked that the trade disputes which have for some time assumed such increasing prominence, do much to bring our artisans into closer relations and more intimate communication with Continental workmen. As the organizations have extended by which these disputes have on each side been supported, employers and employed both endeavour to enlarge the area of conflict far beyond its original limits. On the one hand, employers feel that nothing is so likely to secure them a triumph as being able to import labour, either from other districts or from other countries; the employed are not less ready to perceive that, from their point of view, they have everything to gain by preventing this importation of labour. It consequently becomes one main object of Trades' Unionists, and of others who are attempting to organize the interests of labour, to secure as far as possible concerted action not only among the workmen of their own country, but also among workmen generally. These considerations have induced many of our leading trade societies to have extensive ramifications over the Continent. Many of the most active and intelligent of our workmen are consequently in constant communication with foreign societies. A feeling of comradeship is in this way fostered among the labourers of different nations; an international sentiment thus gradually grows up, and the idea gains ground that labourers, independently of race or of nationality, ought to form one common brotherhood in the war they are waging against what they consider

to be the tyranny of capital. One result has naturally followed from this increase of internationality amongst the Proletariat. Many English workmen have been powerfully influenced by Continental ideas. An explanation is thus, to a great extent, afforded of the tendency which our workmen now show to make more frequent appeals to the State, and to place more reliance upon Government intervention. In this respect, as previously remarked, the difference which once characterized the English and Continental artisan is, in no inconsiderable degree, passing away. It is not intended to imply that the change thus noticed has affected all our workmen. Some of them, but I fear they are a decreasing number, show as little inclination as ever to resort to State help; being above all things anxious to rely upon individual energy, they desire to be freed from much Government control which still impedes freedom of action.

Fully, however, admitting that amongst those who hold these opinions are still to be found some of our ablest artisans*, yet it can scarcely be denied by any who observe the signs of the times that, so far as England is concerned, the demands for State assistance are each year assuming more formidable proportions. This will be sufficiently shown by enumerating some of the many things which the State is, with increasing urgency, asked to supply for the people. It is now, for instance, often said that the Government

* Mr Burnett, who lately so ably led the nine hours' movement in Newcastle, and some other workmen who were most prominently engaged in that struggle, are opposed to the general principle of State intervention. After the signal triumph they gained, they have additional reason to place faith in self-help and self-reliance.

should pay the passage-money of emigrants; should furnish work at good wages for the unemployed; and should secure for labourers comfortable houses and wholesome food at a reasonable rate. Such proposals as these represent the opinions of those who may by comparison be regarded as moderate in their demands. Others form far higher expectations of what the State might do for them. The members of the International Association, who may be considered the extreme party on this subject, have formulated their demands into the following very definite proposals:

1st. Nationalization of land and of all the instruments of industry. This means that the State should buy up the land and the other instruments of industry, and that the people should only be called upon to pay what is vaguely termed a fair and reasonable price for their use.

2nd. The hours of labour are to be shortened by law.

3rd. The State is to provide gratuitous education for the people.

4th. The State is to establish associations of industry or cooperative societies; it is intended that these State institutions should take the place of the present industrial system.

5th. The money which is required, either for the ordinary purposes of the State, or for the carrying out of any of the aforesaid objects, is to be provided by a graduated tax, levied solely on property.

Opinions differ greatly as to the number of Englishmen who belong to the International Association. From the numbers, however, who have been actually

incorporated a most inadequate idea can be formed of the extent to which the principles of the Association have been accepted by our artisans. It must be remembered that the International is partly a political and partly a social organization. The Secretary of the London Branch, in a letter recently published, admits that the Association devotes itself to very different objects in different countries. In France, he says, its aims have hitherto been chiefly political; in Belgium, chiefly social; whereas in Germany they have been social and political in about equal proportions.

It is not my intention to enter into any discussion of the political part of the programme of the International. Reference is made to the subject here with the view of pointing out that many undoubtedly, from political considerations, refuse to join the Association who most cordially sympathise with its social and economic aims. The grave significance to be attributed to the International does not arise so much from the numerical strength of the organization, as from the fact that the economic principles which it has formulated may be regarded as typically representative of ideas which are rapidly attaining increasing influence over workmen of this country.

In one respect this growing tendency to rely upon the State is fraught with greater danger to England than to many other countries. This is not an appropriate place to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Government by party. There is, however, one aspect in which party government may be viewed,

as having a very direct bearing upon the subject we are now considering. The two great political sections who contend for place and power have a constant temptation held out to them to bid against each other for popular support. When, therefore, it is perceived that any particular set of opinions has obtained a great hold upon the masses, place and power will seem to be the lot of the political party which promises to do most to give effect to these opinions. Under the pressure of this temptation, it may, consequently, any day happen that statesmen will accept doctrines and pursue a policy against which, if their judgment was unbiassed, they would be the first to protest. This is a peril which hangs over this country, and recent events have shown that I am not conjuring up an imaginary vision of coming danger. During the last year direct encouragement has been given to some of the most mischievous and alarming features of Modern Socialism by one who is, and by another who has been, a responsible Minister of State. The Budget of 1871 was framed in accordance with some of the financial principles of the International Association; and no member of this organization ever made more reckless promises to the Proletariat than did Sir John Pakington, when, as President of the Social Science Association, he told the workmen, in his address at Leeds, that Parliament ought to secure for them comfortable homes and wholesome food at reasonable prices. A few months before Sir John Pakington enunciated these mischievous doctrines, the people had been virtually told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that if they make some demand, the granting

of which involves additional expenditure, the majority shall avoid contributing a single shilling towards the outlay, and shall be enabled to throw the whole burden upon the payers of income tax. Under such fostering care it is not surprising that there is rapidly growing up in this country an abnormal development of that new form of Socialism, the cardinal principle of which is that all social improvements must be effected by State agency, and must also be carried out by public money, obtained from taxes exclusively levied on property. England, probably, has more reason than any other country to take warning from the experience of the past. For more than two centuries and a half she has had a socialistic institution in full operation. When the consequences which it has produced are traced, some estimate can be formed of the disastrous effects resulting from encouraging the people to rely not only upon others for maintenance, but also to look to others to protect them against their own acts of improvidence. It is scarcely necessary to say that I refer to the celebrated Poor Law of Elizabeth, which first gave to every Englishman a legal claim to maintenance. Thus was embodied in the law of the land one important part of the programme of Modern Socialism. Those who sympathise with the International Association emphatically insist upon the right which every one has, not only to be maintained, but to be provided with work at fair wages. Our Poor Law system has conceded the first part of this demand; and, as will be pointed out in a subsequent essay in this volume, because at one time it was conceded too freely, imprudence and indolence were

so much encouraged, thrift and industry were so much discouraged, that England was brought to the verge of ruin*. During the first thirty years of the present century England was reduced to a most lamentable condition by the old Poor Law. The people each year became more miserable, and it was more and more difficult for industry to struggle against the burden of increasing pauperism. In some districts the rates were so heavy that they absorbed nearly the whole nett produce of the soil; the land scarcely paid to be cultivated even if it could be procured rent free. Industry was, in fact, so heavily burdened, the resources of the country were so severely strained, that the labourer, by honest toil, was often not able to obtain so good a maintenance as that which was guaranteed to the pauper. A country thus circumstanced might be regarded as not only having its prosperity but its permanent stability most seriously threatened. It is not too much to say that national bankruptcy impended over England, and if the old Poor Law had continued in operation for some time longer, honest toil would have been so much discouraged, indolence and improvidence would have been so greatly stimulated, and industry would have been so heavily burdened, that the country would have been stricken with permanent impoverishment. It is impossible to have a more striking illustration of the incalculable evils which will ensue if the people are accustomed to look to others for maintenance, and if the prudent are heavily fined in order that the

* This subject I have fully discussed in *Pauperism, its Causes and Remedies.* Macmillan and Co., 1871.

self-indulgence of the improvident may be gratified. The English Poor Law is distinctly socialistic in its tendencies, and the extent to which this tendency operates depends upon the conditions upon which parochial relief is granted. If it is given with unwise liberality and injudicious laxity, England would soon again suffer from all the ills which afflicted her under the old Poor Law. This is a danger from which it can scarcely be said that the country is safe, when it is seen how strongly the current is running in favour of State assistance, and also when the eagerness is observed with which rival politicians make socialistic bids for popular support. The demand for a national poor rate is beginning to be pressed with increasing urgency. If this were conceded, and if the relief of the poor consequently became a national instead of a parochial charge, there would no longer be any guarantees for economical administration. Even those who profess the greatest faith in the advantages of general economy are often among the most eager to obtain as much money as possible out of the national exchequer for their own locality. So much avidity is shown in getting as large an amount as possible out of the State coffers, that it seems as if the opinion prevails that these coffers represent an inexhaustible source of wealth kept perennially supplied by the spontaneous bounty of Nature; it is apparently entirely forgotten that each shilling in the national treasury represents very much more than a shilling taken out of the pocket of the tax-payer.

A national poor rate, by abolishing the existing guarantees for economy, would inevitably cause relief

to be given with much greater laxity and liberality. A mistaken philanthropy is always prompting a generous treatment of poverty, and this philanthropic sentiment would be permitted to work almost unchecked if the local authorities felt that the money expended was not contributed by them, but by the State. Under such circumstances, it can scarcely be doubted that the vices of the old Poor Law would again come into operation with even more than their former intensity; an increasing amount would each year be spent in rewarding indolence and improvidence; the industrious would see that they would have to bear a steadily augmenting burden of taxation in order to give maintenance to those who were too lazy to work, too imprudent to save, or too self-indulgent to exercise self-restraint. When a community is brought under such influences as these, it is as hopeless to look for national well-being as it is to search for figs on thorns or grapes on thistles. It is sometimes thought that a nation has to ward off no danger so great as foreign invasion; when, however, the First Napoleon, collecting his fleet at Boulogne, meditated an attack on these shores, the peril which then hung over England was not half so great as that which was soon afterwards brought upon her by a vicious administration of the Poor Law. The presence of the enemy often calls forth national virtues of the highest order, and arouses a people to heroic efforts; the danger is not a secret one, all are aware of it, all feel it, and all consequently are interested in striving to rid themselves of it; the operation however of a baneful social and economic influence is far more insidious; it works on stealthily

and unperceived; some, not knowing its true nature, encourage it and help it forward; and at length, when it is too late, the discovery may be made that it has, by casting a fatal blight upon industry, sapped the foundations of national prosperity. If a nation is determined to bring ruin upon some neighbouring country, it is well known from recent events the kind of preparations that are made; the whole people are brought under the influence of the military spirit; every able-bodied man is carefully drilled; vast stores are accumulated; every piece of information about the strength and weakness of the intended victim is carefully noted. There is, probably, however, a more effectual way than this of consummating the degradation and ruin of a nation. Let a people be once given as much money as they choose to spend in aiding the improvident; let them enjoy such a supposed bounty for a generation or two, and the disasters which will ensue will be far more serious and permanent than are ever likely to be brought upon them by a foreign invader. When the subject is viewed in this light, those must be considered as among the worst enemies of their country, who, by the advocacy of such proposals as those to which allusion has already been made, discourage among the people self-reliance, who teach them to depend upon others to save them from the consequences of their own indolence, and who foster amongst them the belief that all the ills from which they suffer are due to the State, and therefore may be cured by Government intervention. In order, however, still further to prove this, it is my intention, in the course of the Lectures, to which this and the following

essay may be regarded as introductory, to attempt to trace the consequences which ensue from bringing into operation those social and economic remedies which now receive a very general approval. As most of these remedies involve an increased amount of State intervention, and as this growing tendency to resort to the State for assistance is the main characteristic of that which I have designated Modern Socialism, it will perhaps be advisable to make a few preliminary remarks on the general subject of Government interference.

H. F.

II.

THE GENERAL ASPECTS OF STATE INTERVENTION.

Upon this question, political economists, and others who take an interest in social subjects, are divided into two great parties. On the one side, there are those who wish that the State should do very much more for the people; on the other side, there are those who think that the influence now exerted by the Government should be greatly curtailed. There are consequently two distinct phases of thought, each most ably and powerfully represented. The first party may generally be said to be composed of some of the most enterprising, intelligent, and politically active of the working classes. It also embraces most of those who have strong philanthropic tendencies, but who have not directed systematic thought to the consideration of the true causes that produce the suffering which excites in them such generous sympathy. Among those who desire to see Government intervention greatly curtailed, there are to be found a comparatively small number of exceptionally thoughtful working men.

The most consistent and thorough-going upholders of these doctrines, however, belong to a certain philosophic school, the distinguished leader of which is Mr Herbert Spencer. His writings contain probably by far the most powerful and exhaustive statement of the arguments against over-legislation, and against the growing tendency to rely upon State assistance. These opinions generally receive the designation of "*laissez faire.*" In a very circuitous way, it has, as it were, accidentally happened that "*laissez faire*" is popularly supposed to derive authority and sanction from the principles of political economy. The advocates of Free Trade had to attack one kind of Government interference; and, in abolishing Protection, they undoubtedly released commerce from numberless fetters which had been imposed by the State. The sympathy which the Free Traders were thus naturally led to feel for "*laissez faire*" soon became increased by another circumstance. The Factory Acts, when first proposed, were vehemently resisted by the manufacturers as an unwarrantable interference with industrial freedom. The majority of these manufacturers were leading Free Traders, and were also prominent members of what is known as the Manchester School. As, however, the abolition of protection and opposition to the Factory Acts were both defended on the ground of hostility to State interference, there soon arose a connection between the Manchester School and "*laissez faire.*" During the Anti-Corn-Law agitation, the advocates of Free Trade so repeatedly appealed to the principles of political economy that there was assumed to be a peculiar connection between this science and the Manchester

School. As however this School had identified itself with the doctrines of "*laissez faire*," it was soon popularly supposed that "*laissez faire*" and political economy were intimately associated with each other. It has been thought advisable to explain the origin of this association of ideas, because when its accidental character is clearly perceived it is more easy to understand that political economy gives no sanction whatever to the doctrines of "*laissez faire*." In fact there is nothing whatever in the principles of economic science to lead to the establishment of any general conclusion with regard to the advantages or disadvantages of State interference.

Error and confusion are sure to result if we seek to lay down some rule as applicable to every proposed case of Government intervention. Although the main object I have in view is to point out the evils resulting from an undue reliance upon the State, yet it seems to me that those who exhibit this tendency scarcely adopt a more erroneous course than those who are such extreme advocates of "*laissez faire*," that under all circumstances they condemn Government interference without enquiring into the nature of the particular instance to which it is to be applied. As an example of this it may be mentioned that those who are most thoroughly indoctrinated with "*laissez faire*" apparently consider that they are bound to oppose compulsory education because it involves State interference. Such opposition affords an instructive warning against the danger of offering too implicit obedience to any general principle. A moment's consideration will suffice to show that interference on behalf of children and on behalf of grown-up

persons rest on entirely different grounds. The latter kind of interference may be objected to because it impedes the freedom of men's actions, is antagonistic to individual liberty, and, in the words of Wilhelm von Humboldt, "prevents the harmonious development of the human character." The child, however, independently of all Government interference, must be under the control of a parent or a guardian. It is therefore idle to talk of his individual liberty and of his freedom of action; these must be more or less completely surrendered to his parent or guardian. It is therefore evident that the question of State intervention must be regarded from an entirely different point of view when it is applied on behalf of children. It most generally happens that they require the aid of the State when those who are constituted their natural protectors neglect their duty or abuse their power. The extent to which there is such an abuse of power or such a neglect of duty must be the chief element in determining the limits to which it is desirable that the State should extend its protection to children. A child having no power to provide itself with food and clothing, it will be generally admitted that the State ought to take some action if a parent either cannot or will not supply his children with the necessaries of life. Although this is a case in which the necessity of some interference will be at once acknowledged, yet the conditions under which such interference should take place suggest considerations of the utmost importance. The history of our Poor Law abundantly shows that if the State renders aid to neglected children with too great liberality, and if at the same time parents, who are

responsible for these neglected children, are treated with undue leniency, a most disastrous encouragement is given to improvidence and immorality. Then again it would probably be admitted by the most enthusiastic friends of compulsory education that, in order to justify it, it ought, in the first instance, to be proved that every one who is born in a civilised country is entitled to claim from his parents a certain amount of mental training, and that, if this claim is ignored by the parents, it is the duty of the State to enforce it. No one would be prepared to say that interference between the parent and the child, in reference to education, is good in itself; it would not be needed if the social condition of the country were more satisfactory; and those who are among the foremost to recognise the importance of compulsory education confidently hope that it will gradually be rendered unnecessary as the nation advances in social improvement. Here then is a case in which the right or wrong of Government interference cannot be determined by *a priori* considerations; a trustworthy decision can only be arrived at on the point by ascertaining to what extent parents neglect the duty which they owe to their children of providing them with a certain amount of mental instruction.

Another illustration of the importance of deciding each proposed case of Government interference upon its merits, is afforded by considering the circumstances under which it is desirable that the State should attempt to regulate the hours of labour. Such interference is ordinarily condemned on some such ground as the following:—It is said to be contrary to individual

freedom; it is urged that if it is legitimate that the State should say how many hours a man should work with his hands, it would be equally legitimate to decree the amount of mental labour that should be permitted. A Governmental official would consequently have to visit every study; a man would have to be watched in his daily avocations; the time when he retired to rest and when he rose from slumber might have to be noted. Life with all this worry and watching would scarcely be worth having. Then again it is said that a legal limitation of the hours of labour might so cripple productive industry as to render successful competition with foreign countries impossible. The trade of a country might thus be lost, and the people be deprived of the chief source of their maintenance. Fully admitting the force of these and other considerations, I view with as much disfavour as any one can, the cry which is now being raised in favour of a law fixing a legal limit of so many hours for the day's work. But those who are strongly opposed to such legislation should be careful to avoid the not unfrequent error of hastily concluding that the State can never be justified under any circumstances in regulating the hours of labour. It certainly appears to me that it is quite as desirable to pass a law limiting the number of hours which a child is permitted to work, as it would be undesirable to impose similar restrictions upon men and women. If grown-up persons overwork themselves they do it of their own free will. They cannot be compelled to labour more hours than they please unless they are either held in subjection as slaves, or unless they are in some other way deprived of personal

liberty. A child however is not permitted to exercise freedom of judgment; he does not himself decide at what age he shall begin work, and the number of hours he shall each day labour. All this is determined for him by others. If, therefore, it can be shown, as it has undoubtedly been shown in this country, that, through the cupidity and mistaken economy of employers, and through the selfishness, avarice, and poverty of parents, large numbers of children are worked too young and are also greatly overworked, then it seems to me that one of the clearest cases that can be imagined is made out in favour of State intervention. Under the circumstances just described it is only by State intervention that the child can be protected against what may prove to be an incalculable and irreparable injury. The only argument of weight which has been suggested against such interference has been urged by those who say that to deprive a parent of a portion of his children's earnings, is extremely unjust upon those parents who are extremely poor. The argument which is thus suggested by the poverty of the parent will be more fully considered in a subsequent essay*. It is simply one branch of a very wide subject which has many ramifications. We will here simply say that, after making due allowance for the difficulties associated with the poverty of parents, we believe it can be proved that the balance of argument strongly preponderates in favour of the State interfering on behalf of overworked children.

It is not necessary to quote other instances to show that State interference on behalf of children is usually

* See the Essay entitled "What can be done for the agricultural labourer?"

to be defended on grounds entirely different from those which would be brought forward to justify similar interference on behalf of grown-up persons. I will, therefore, proceed to state some of the considerations which have to be taken into account when Government intervention is applied to adults. It will be useful, in the first instance, to mention certain principles, to the truth of which scarcely any will refuse assent. It will, for instance, be generally admitted that Government intervention is not a good thing in itself; the more it can be avoided the better. Probably the best measure which can be obtained of the welfare of a community is to ascertain to what extent each member of it can, with advantage to all the rest, be permitted to have freedom of action. It is obvious that this freedom will be curtailed in proportion to the extent to which the authority of the State has to be introduced into private life. The following considerations will probably suffice to show that the well-being of a community may be estimated in the manner just suggested. Nothing, for example, brings such manifold evils upon a nation as widespread ignorance among its people. No one would think of advocating compulsory education if children generally received an adequate amount of instruction. Consequently the extent to which the necessity exists of the State interfering with education may be regarded as a measure of popular ignorance; and the amount of this ignorance indicates the difference between the present condition of a country and the welfare it might enjoy. If another example is required to corroborate what has been stated, we may revert to the instance

of the State interfering in reference to the employment of children. As previously stated, children are sent to work too soon, or are worked too many hours a day, chiefly in consequence of the cupidity and mistaken economy of employers, or in consequence of the selfishness, avarice, or poverty of parents. With the decline in the force of these agencies there would be a corresponding diminution in the necessity for this particular kind of Government interference. But could there be more conclusive evidence of a marked improvement in the general condition of a country than would be supplied by the fact that the agencies to which allusion has just been made were exerting less influence? A moral and intellectual advance would be indicated by the circumstance that cupidity and mistaken economy were much more rare among employers. Again, still more striking evidence would be afforded of general advancement, if parents were so little avaricious or selfish, and if so little poverty existed among them, that they were rarely or never tempted to permit their children to be overworked.

It is, however, not necessary to say more with a view of showing that Government interference is not good in itself, but that it must be regarded rather as a disagreeable remedy which has to be applied in order to cure or counteract various defects in the social condition of a country. The remedy is not only a disagreeable one, but it may be compared to some of those strong medicines which not unfrequently leave behind after consequences of a serious kind; these medicines cannot be given to a patient without

some risk; they should always be used with the utmost caution and discrimination. Statesmen, therefore, when they are pressed to extend the area of Government intervention, should consider that they occupy a position not unlike that of a physician who has to decide whether he will give to a patient some extremely dangerous drug. The physician, if he is at all worthy of his profession, will endeavour to ascertain the exact state of his patient, and will carefully note all his symptoms. If he does not do this, but if, on the contrary, he adopts whatever course he believes will give most immediate satisfaction to the patient and his friends, mischief is almost sure to ensue, and he forfeits all claim to confidence and respect. In a similar way statesmen, when they are asked to use State intervention, should not forget that it is a perilous experiment, and should do all in their power to ascertain the exact circumstances under which it is applied, in order to estimate, with as much correctness as possible, what will be its future consequences. If statesmen do not do this, but if, on the contrary, they adopt that course which they believe will most promote the interests of party, and give them the most immediate popularity, then the gravest misfortunes may be brought upon their country.

When it is considered how strongly the current of public opinion is, at the present time, running in favour of State interference, it is impossible to dwell with too great earnestness upon the demoralization and mischief which would ensue if some of the demands which are now so constantly urged for State

assistance should be conceded. Of all these demands none are so insidious, none so dangerous, as those which would call in the aid of a central authority to enable one section of the community to levy contributions for its own advantage from the rest of the nation. This has already been done to a most alarming extent, and a powerful influence would be exerted in the same direction by many of the social movements which now receive popular favour. As a proof of what has just been stated, it will be sufficient to remark, without discussing the subject with further detail here, that about £9,000,000 are annually levied in England and Wales for the relief of the poor. This great sum represents a heavy tax imposed on industry, and no small portion of the amount is taken from the industrious and provident to be distributed among those who have brought poverty upon themselves by indolence and improvidence. As if the harm already done by thus encouraging recklessness and discouraging thrift had not been sufficiently great, an appeal has often been influentially put forward to administer the Poor Law with greater liberality. This simply means that the industrious should be still more heavily fined, in order that a more liberal reward might be given to improvidence. Some of the best intentioned people are thus unconsciously advocating schemes which would bring a similar baneful influence into operation. State emigration, free education, work for the unemployed at remunerative wages, the boarding out of deserted children, these and many other proposals have numerous and powerful advocates. Like the Poor Law, however, they may all be regarded as developments

of the principle that it is not simply by the sweat of the brow or by the labour of the brain that men must support themselves, but that they have a right not only to look to others to provide them with maintenance, but as far as possible to protect them against the consequences of their own voluntary acts. But although the principle, just referred to, cannot, in my opinion, be too strongly condemned, yet it must not be supposed that we should be justified in at once rushing hastily to the conclusion that there should be no poor law whatever, that under no circumstances should free education be given, that the State should never assist emigration, and that neglected children should not be cared for. The important question which has to be considered is this:—If any of these things ought to be done, under what circumstances, and in what particular manner should they be done? In attempting to come to a decision on this point, it is above all things essential to keep in view that the utmost discouragement should be given to improvidence. For instance, it has been proved that out-door relief is often simply regarded as a gift, the acceptance of which entails no disagreeable consequences. Residence in a workhouse is, on the contrary, generally looked upon as a somewhat serious punishment. It is, therefore, obvious that in-door relief discourages voluntary pauperism, whereas it is greatly stimulated by out-door relief. Consequently, without abolishing our Poor Law, much of the harm which it has done in the past may in the future be avoided if the granting of out-door relief were either altogether forbidden, or only permitted in very excep-

tional cases. Again, with regard to emigration, although reasons will afterwards be stated which lead to the conclusion that it would be most unwise for the State to undertake to pay the passage-money of all who might wish to settle in foreign countries, yet, in the case of some great emergency, it might be advisable as an exceptional measure to resort to State emigration. In a similar way, although I believe that a general system of free education ought to be resisted because it would weaken the sense of parental obligation, yet, in my opinion, no child ought to be permitted to grow up in ignorance because his school fees are not forthcoming. It would be scarcely less unjust for a parent to make others pay for the education of his children than it would be to make others pay for their food and clothing. The State very properly orders local authorities to undertake the maintenance of children if they are unprovided with the necessaries of life; but if a parent wilfully refuses to feed and clothe his children, then he is criminally punished. If, however, it is not a voluntary act then he is treated as a pauper. In a similar way, I think, a parent ought to be punished if he makes other people pay for the education of his children, in order that he may have something more to spend in his own enjoyment. If, however, he is too poor to pay the school fees then there is just as much reason why he should be treated as a pauper as if he were unable to feed and clothe his children.

Enough has now probably been said to show with what extreme caution any scheme should be viewed which proposes to benefit a class by the expenditure of

money obtained either by local or imperial taxation. As previously remarked, the objections to be urged against such proposals assume greatly increased force when, as is not unfrequently the case, the class amongst whom the money is chiefly to be distributed are not to contribute towards the extra taxation which the additional expenditure will necessitate. Thus the carrying out of the social and economic changes advocated by the International Society would involve a heavy outlay of public money. At the same time it is to be observed that it is one of the cardinal principles of this association, to raise all taxation by a graduated property tax.

There are, however, other instances of Government intervention which do not directly involve expenditure of public money. If an attempt is made to ascertain the effects of such interference, it will be found that considerations of a very complicated character are often involved. At the outset of such an investigation, certain principles can be laid down which will greatly assist us in arriving at a right decision in any particular case, although they will not furnish any general conclusions of universal applicability. Sanitary legislation affords an instance in which the interference of the State will most generally be admitted to be both just and desirable. A man who neglects drainage and other matters upon which the preservation of health depends, may by the loss of health not only injure himself and those who are dependent upon him, but may become the centre and source of widespread disease. Because it is thus comparatively easy to decide in favour of a compulsory system of drainage of houses

and compulsory purification of rivers from sewerage, it is not unfrequently supposed that, for similar reasons, the State ought to interpose in such a matter as restricting, if not prohibiting, the sale of intoxicating liquors. Thus it is said that intemperance is not less injurious to health than defective sanitary arrangements, and it is argued that if it is within the appropriate functions of the State to secure good drainage, it must be quite as much within its legitimate functions to impede or forbid the sale of intoxicating liquors. But in order to justify such a conclusion it would be necessary to prove that as imperfect drainage is bad in itself, so all consumption of alcohol must be deleterious; the extent to which it is deleterious merely varying with the amount of consumption. The analogy, however, at once breaks down if it is admitted, as it generally will be, that beer, wine and other alcoholic beverages, if taken in due moderation, need not be pernicious, but on the contrary, may be beneficial. It is, however, argued by the advocates of a prohibitory liquor law, that the mischief resulting from drunkenness is not confined to the drunkard himself; he often so much injures his family as to reduce them and himself to pauperism; sometimes he is led into crime; in this way, consequently, intemperance greatly increases pauperism and crime. It thus inflicts a serious loss upon the community, and adds much to the taxation of the country. Such considerations as these induce many people to think that as the whole community is injured by drunkenness, the State should give the majority the right to restrict or prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors. The demand for the exercise of such a power

obviously suggests considerations entirely different from those which are associated with enforcing a certain sanitary scheme, such, for instance, as the carrying out of an uniform system of drainage. No one can be benefited by having a place imperfectly drained, whereas all who, for example, drink beer and wine in judicious moderation may be subjected to great inconvenience, and may even be injured if the sale of these articles is forbidden or greatly impeded. Thus if it were enacted, as has been so often proposed, that there should be only one public-house for each 1000 or 2000 people, many men, if they wanted to purchase a glass of beer, would have perhaps to walk a couple of miles. They would have to submit to this trouble and inconvenience not through any fault of their own, but solely because certain people do not practise self-restraint. Then again if the number of public-houses were artificially limited in the manner proposed, a great industry would manifestly have to be carried on as a monopoly. It is difficult to imagine any trade conducted as a strict monopoly without causing abuse and unfairness. It would be almost impossible to find any authority who might with safety be entrusted to select the persons who should enjoy the privilege of exercising this monopoly. Competition in the trade would also be to a great extent destroyed, and competition is the best security for fair prices and a good article. It has, however, been suggested that the monopoly should be put up to auction; but if this were done, the large brewers would be able to outbid less wealthy competitors, and the trade would be thrown more completely than it is now into the hands of a limited class.

Again it is obvious that those who pay a large price for the privilege of exercising the monopoly would recoup themselves with handsome interest for their outlay; they would do this, by charging an additional price for all the articles sold. It thus appears that one of the results of carrying out such a policy of restriction would be to subject temperate people to great inconvenience. They might have to walk a considerable distance for every glass of beer they wished to purchase, and they would be obliged to pay an additional price for it. There certainly seems to be good reason for condemning Government intervention when it subjects all who can exercise self-restraint to loss and inconvenience, in order that the force of temptation may be somewhat reduced to the self-indulgent.

It will perhaps, however, be urged that if these suggested legislative restrictions should cause annoyance to temperate people, they would be abundantly compensated both for their additional trouble and for the additional price they might have to pay for beer, by the stimulus which would be given to the prosperity of the country, and by the reduction which might be effected in its taxation if drunkenness were diminished. But before the individual liberty of a whole community is interfered with, because some abuse freedom of action, justice and policy alike demand that everything should be done to see whether such abuse could not be checked by punishing those who do not exercise self-restraint. Thus before any legislation is sanctioned which would impose upon temperate people many vexatious restrictions, a

far more decided effort should be made than has ever yet been attempted to punish intemperance, and make the drunkard more directly bear the consequence of his acts. At the present time an exactly opposite course is adopted. It seems to be a recognised principle of the law of this country that crimes committed by persons while they are drunk should be treated with exceptional leniency. It is hardly possible to take up a paper without seeing cases in which magistrates either altogether excuse the perpetrator of some dastardly assault, or greatly mitigate the usual punishment, on the ground that the accused was drunk at the time the offence was committed.

The subject of the liquor traffic has been alluded to here, chiefly for the purpose of showing that the problem of Government interference involves so many complicated and difficult considerations that each demand for it should be separately investigated, in order that the special circumstances involved in each particular case should be carefully weighed. It would have been foreign to the immediate purpose of this essay to attempt anything like a complete discussion of the questions involved in greatly restricting or prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors. If it had been my intention to enter upon such a discussion, it would have been necessary, amongst other things, to have referred to the experience which is afforded by America of the working of a prohibitory liquor law in that country. The evidence of those must have been examined who assert that the demoralization which ensues from the gross and systematic evasion of this law, far more than counterbalances any good which

may result from the slight effect produced in somewhat diminishing intemperance *.

I have, however, already entered into what may probably appear to be a too detailed consideration of the general subject of State intervention. I have been chiefly induced to do so because one of the most characteristic features of Modern Socialism is the growing tendency which it displays to demand State assistance, especially in the form of grants of public money to carry out social and economic reforms. These general remarks on government intervention will moreover render a not unimportant assistance in discussing various social questions which will be referred to in the subsequent essays of this volume.

H. F.

* Interesting information on this subject is to be found in a small book recently published by Mr Justin McCarthy, called *Prohibitory Legislation in the United States.* Mr McCarthy visited the United States with the express purpose of investigating the effects of the Maine Liquor Law. In his opinion this legislation has not only failed, but has incidentally produced very serious mischief.

III.

FREE EDUCATION IN ITS ECONOMIC ASPECTS*.

DURING the course of the election of the members of the School Boards it was observable that all the working men candidates and all those who are special representatives of the Birmingham League declared themselves in favour of free education. It was expressly stated by many of them that they did not desire to see free education provided for those children only whose parents could not afford to pay the school fees. The adoption of this course would, it was argued, place the "stigma of pauperism" on such parents; in order therefore to avoid any invidious distinction between parents who did pay for their children's education, and those who did not, it was contended that primary education should be free to all alike. It will be here endeavoured very briefly to show why I think the stigma of pauperism ought to attach to parents who are too poor to pay for the primary education of their children, and why consequently I differ entirely

[1] Letter to the "*Times*," Dec. 1870.

with the views of the leaders of the working classes on the subject of free education.

In the first place it may be asked, on what principle is the resort to compulsory education justifiable? The reply cannot be because education is a good thing for children; or because education tends to make children grow up more useful members of society. Exactly similar remarks might with equal truth be made with regard to the desirability of providing children with a good supply of milk, meat, and warm clothing; but no philanthropists have as yet suggested that there should be an act of parliament for the purpose of securing to every boy and girl in the country a sufficient quantity of milk and flannel. It must be borne in mind that though this proposition would be universally considered ridiculous, its absurdity does not arise from the fact that the State does not interfere in regulating the food and clothing of children. The State does interfere; it fixes a minimum, and declares virtually that every parent is bound to provide his children with sufficient food and clothing to keep them alive. All parents who are unable to do this are branded with the stigma of pauperism. The advocates of compulsory education have no other warrant for requiring parents to be compelled to educate their children, than that a certain amount of education is as necessary for a child's mind, as a certain amount of food and clothing is for its body. The only justification for compulsion is that a child who grows up without education, suffers a permanent and cruel injury, which is perhaps worse in its consequences than any physical injury can be. It is on this ground only that the State is justified in enforcing the primary

education of every child; and on this ground there is no presumption that the State should provide free education for all children. The State in effect would say to parents "In bringing children into the world you incur the responsibility of feeding, clothing and educating them; if you undertake this responsibility without being able to fulfil it you justly deserve to bear the stigma of pauperism." If education is as necessary as food and clothing (and if it is not there is no justification for compulsion) why ought parents who bring children into the world without being able to educate them, escape the odium of pauperism? No such indulgence is extended to parents who cannot feed and clothe their children.

There is another very strong objection to be urged against the cry for free education. People sometimes talk as if anyone who objects to free education must be desirous of rejecting some gratuitous bounty of nature: free education is spoken of as if the expense of working the huge educational machinery of the country would be met in some mysterious manner without anybody being required to pay for it. I think it may be shewn that to no one, not even to the very poorest, will education be really free. The very poorest of the poor, who are already the most improvident section of the population, would obtain apparently free education for their children; all other classes of the community would be required to contribute to an education rate. When therefore free education is advocated, it is not meant that education should be free, but that one mode of payment is considered preferable to another. This is recognised by Mr Applegarth in a paper which

he has published on the subject of free education. He says "If school pence be abolished a school rate must of necessity be substituted; and far from a workman feeling degraded by sending his child to a rate-supported school, on the contrary he will feel that in part the public school is his own; that the child attends it by right and not by favour." The effect of this method of paying for education on those classes of the poor who pay rates will first be considered; its effect on those who are excused paying their rates on the ground of poverty will next be dealt with. In the first place it is evident that economical administration will be greatly discouraged by the system of defraying all expenses from a rate. The school rate will therefore have a constant tendency to increase, and it may very probably reduce many of the poor to pauperism who could without this additional rate have maintained their independence. In many districts in London this is the actual effect of every additional penny which is added to the poor rate. In the second place the operation of a school rate would be unjust, and would prove a great discouragement to providence before and during marriage. A working man who had not considered that his present position justified him in marrying would have to contribute to the rate, and would therefore, though he had no children of his own, be compelled to pay for the schooling of the children of other people, who had been less self-denying than himself. In the same way a married man with two children would have to pay for the education of the children of those parents who had twelve or fourteen. This argument is generally received with considerable surprise by the

advocates of free education. "O," they say, "of course, but then the single man and the married man with a small family are just the right people to make contribute to the education rate, *they can afford it so well.*" It seems to be considered that the reward of restraint and prudence should be a heavy fine to defray the cost of the self-indulgence and improvidence of others. Will it ever be suggested that a rate should be levied on all classes of the community to pay the cost of drunkenness? The sober people could so well afford to contribute to it.

It is no doubt considered that one of the advantages of free education will be that the rate will reach not only the poor but the rich. It ought not, however, to be forgotten that the incidence of a rate or a tax does not always coincide with the direct method of raising it. It is possible that the levying of an additional rate might have the effect of diminishing the existing capital of the country; and in this case the incidence of the rate would principally fall on the working classes. "If the rate of profit is already at the practical minimum, that is, at the point at which all that portion of the annual increment which would tend to reduce profits is carried off either by exportation or speculation; then if a tax is imposed which reduces profits still lower, the same causes which previously carried off the increase would probably carry off some of the existing capital." (*Principles of Political Economy*, Vol. II. p. 407.) Mr Mill goes on to show that when the accumulation of capital is retarded by the abstraction of a portion of its profit, it is inevitable that a part of the burden will be thrown off

the capitalist upon the labourer or the landlord; and that if population continues to increase as before, the sufferer will be the labourer. It is therefore by no means certain that the working classes will be able to escape paying in full for the education of their children. The tendency of the so-called free system would in the first instance probably be to discourage providence with regard to marriage; in this case the increase of the population would be greater than ever; and then if the burden of the rate upon profits was so great as to lead to the export of the existing capital of the country, the wage fund would be reduced and wages would consequently decline at a time when a considerable increase in the number of the wage-receiving class had just taken place. The working classes would consequently suffer in two ways; there would be more mouths to feed and less food to put into them.

If the example of America is urged as showing the fallacy of all these fears, the comparison may be shown to be altogether a false one. The economic conditions of America are precisely the reverse of our own. She has vast undeveloped resources, and a very scanty population in proportion to her means of producing the necessaries of life. Almost any amount of capital, and any number of skilled labourers, could be absorbed in America in working new fields of industry. In America profits and wages are high, and an amount of taxation is consequently endured, which would completely paralyse the industry of our own country. It is, therefore, unreasonable to affirm that because America can afford a particularly expensive mode of educating her citizens, which at the same

time acts in some degree as an incentive to population, we ought to follow her example.

Let the effect of free education in the poorest section of the population now be considered. In every town and village in the kingdom there are numbers of people living in the most abject poverty. In towns whole families herd together in a single room; in the country labourers with wives and large families frequently earn not more than 9*s.* or 10*s.* a week. A week's sickness, or a week's loss of employment, leaves these poor people destitute; they look upon the parish as their natural support; a large number are constantly in receipt of relief, and they look forward to the parish maintaining them throughout their old age after they are past work. They do not consider that their scanty wages should deter them from marriage; on the contrary, they know that they and their fathers before them have always had a claim on the parish for maintenance; and if they think about their children at all before they are born they believe that the parish will be also bound, if necessary, to maintain them. They make no provision for old age, because the self-denial necessary for saving would be thrown away, inasmuch as the man who has not saved will be able to obtain from the parish a weekly allowance, as large as that which would result from years of careful saving. Can it be doubted by any who have enquired into the subject that the principal cause of this miserable dependence of a great section of the labouring population is the Poor Law system? When wages are exceptionally low in any industry, or when, in other words, the supply of labour exceeds the demand, the

distress occasioned among the labourers has an immediate tendency to prevent an increase of their numbers; thus, when the supply of labour exceeds the demand, natural forces are immediately set at work to bring down the supply to a level with the demand. The Poor Law system steps in to impede the action of this natural relief to the over-burdened labour market; it takes away from the labourer all the strongest inducements for restraint, and it assures him that however many children he may choose to have, he and they have all a right to be supported by the parish, not on the disagreeable condition of entering the workhouse, but in the more welcome form of out-door relief. Could any system be devised which will more completely ensure the dependence of the poor and the constant increase of pauperism? The poor laws raise the price of provisions and lower the real price of labour by removing the natural restraints on population: they destroy (in the words of Malthus) "the moral obligation imposed on every man by the commands of God and nature to support his own children." "Can the most fertile imagination," he continues, "conceive a restraint on population at once so natural, so just, so consonant with the laws of God, and to the best laws framed by the most enlightened men, as that each individual should be responsible for the maintenance of his own children; that is, that he should be subjected to the natural inconveniences and difficulties arising from the indulgence of his inclinations?" The Poor Law system, especially through the administration of out-door relief, gives in effect a promise to the poor that they shall not suffer the natural

inconveniences and difficulties arising from having a greater number of children than they can afford to keep. This promise has the effect of stimulating population; but it is, in the nature of things, a promise which it is impossible to keep; for the supply of food, and of the capital which provides the wages of labour, is not increased by the Poor Law. Hence the relief given to the poor is apparent rather than real. If, in a time of great scarcity of meat, a society were started to give to each poor family 3*s.* a week many persons would conclude that this sum would enable them all to get a piece of meat for their Sunday's dinner. But this, as Malthus has pointed out, would be a very erroneous supposition. The gift of 3*s.* to every poor family would not increase the quantity of meat to be had. The fact, which the Poor Law seems not to recognise, is that an increased number of people cannot be fed without an increased quantity of food, and that food of all kinds is a commodity which cannot be indefinitely increased. Hence, as may be seen in innumerable instances of destitution, starvation, and semi-starvation, the promise of maintenance given by the Poor Law is not and cannot be kept. The poor must bear, at last, in one form or another, the suffering they bring on themselves by reckless multiplication. Which of the two courses is the most just, honest, and, above all, the most humane—To hide from the poor the necessary consequences of their own acts, by giving to them a delusive promise of maintenance; or to let them see in close juxtaposition improvidence and suffering in their true relations as cause and effect? The action of the Poor Law conceals

the necessary connection of these two inseparable facts. Its humanity is a sham; its professions may be compared to the words of the serpent to the woman, "Thou shalt not surely die."

The Poor Law teaches the poor that self-restraint is no benefit to them, and that self-indulgence entails no additional suffering on themselves or their children. Hence, self-restraint, the quality which of all others is most essential to man's welfare, which of all others is the most distinguishing mark between a civilised man and a savage, is powerfully discouraged; and this is done in the name of humanity and compassion for the sufferings of the poor. The evils of the Poor Law, and the misery it produces among those whom it is intended to relieve, have a very powerful bearing on the question of free education. Free education would be an immense extension to all classes of the poor of the system of out-door relief. The discouragement of self-restraint, which is one of the most striking results of the Poor Law, would, by a system of universal free education, operate, in a minor degree, on every section of the working classes. The demoralisation caused by the Poor Law does not act upon the best and most independent of the working classes; these provide, by means of benefit societies, trades' unions, and clubs, against times of sickness and loss of employment; but, by removing the stigma of pauperism from free education, and extending it indiscriminately to all, no section of the working classes will escape from the pernicious influence of this new kind of out-door relief. There are thousands of working men and women who are ready to make any sacrifice to secure

education for their children; hundreds of small economies are practised by the mother, who is ambitious to give her boys and girls learning enough to secure them a good start in life. The same motive has probably enabled more fathers to resist the temptations of intemperance than the Alliance and all the temperance societies joined together. This most powerful and most ennobling of motives for self-restraint would be removed by a system of free education. With a Poor Law which gives a right of maintenance to every one, extended by an educational system which provides free education for every one, pauperism and intemperance will continue to flourish. After a few years of such a system it will perhaps be quoted, as incontrovertible evidence of the progressive state of the country and the satisfactory condition of its inhabitants, that the population is increasing faster than ever, and that the consumption of beer and spirits per head of the population is every year becoming larger and larger. Any one who pointed out that the population returns showed a greater relative number of paupers, or who expressed a doubt as to the benefit resulting from an increased consumption of beer and spirits, would be considered either wilfully perverse or cold-hearted and cruel; the indignation against such a person would rise to a climax, if he ventured to describe by the ugly terms increased pauperism and drunkenness, those very facts which newspapers and politicians appeal to as the surest signs of national progress and general prosperity.

It is sometimes said by the friends of free education that it will be impossible to work compulsion if

the parents are called upon to pay the school fees. It is not often of much use in a question which involves so many of the peculiar characteristics of the economic conditions of a country as this subject of free education, to appeal to the experience of other countries. In America education is compulsory and free; in Prussia and Saxony education is compulsory and not free. If we wish to learn from the experience of other countries we should not blindly copy their institutions without considering whether we possess the conditions necessary for their maintenance. It may be said that it would be better for England to follow the example of America than that of Prussia and Saxony; that we would much rather be like America than like Prussia and Saxony. But it is not a question merely of what we would like, we must also consider what we are. As previously remarked our economic conditions are in many respects the very reverse of those of America; and if we appeal to the experience of other countries on this question of free education, we should look out for instances in which compulsory education has been carried out in the midst of circumstances resembling those of our own country. It is extremely difficult—nay impossible—to find perfectly satisfactory instances of this kind; the economic condition of England is so peculiar that no exactly analogous case can be found in which compulsory education has been tried; but we should at any rate seek cases in which the difference is the least marked. Tried by this standard we should look more to the example of Prussia and Saxony than to America; these countries in respect to the proportion of their population and their national resources

bear more resemblance to England than England does to America. Prussia and Saxony have not adopted free education; there are however many reasons for thinking that even if they had, its effect would not have been so pernicious, as it would be in this country; for no other nation is subject to the burden of a poor law like ours. So far then as we are justified in profiting by the example of other countries, experience shows that compulsion can be carried out, without the assistance of free education. It will be a matter which can only be decided by direct observation of the working of compulsion to find out whether there are any parents, not already pauperised, who are absolutely unable to pay their children's school pence. The cry for free education will, of course, be a great encouragement to unprincipled or selfish parents to protest that they cannot pay for their children's schooling; such as these would gladly have a little more money every week to spend in a public house; and experience will probably prove that such parents will shew the greatest resistance to the compulsory system, as long as they are called upon to pay for it. As a rule it is not the poverty but the self-indulgence of a parent which stands in the way of his child's education; this self-indulgence would be checked by making him pay the school pence; it would be encouraged by a system of free education. The fact that millions are spent every year by the working classes in spirits alone is not compatible with the theory that poverty is the most formidable obstacle in the way of education. If however experience should prove that there are parents, not yet pauperised, with whom it would be absolutely impossi-

ble to pay for their children's schooling, and who on account of their crushing poverty could not pay any fine imposed in consequence of the non-attendance of their children, what is to be done? You cannot fine the parent because he has nothing to pay the fine with; you cannot for the same reason insist on his paying the school fees; the system of compulsory education demands that under no circumstances shall the child be allowed to grow up in ignorance. In such a case, unless the rigidity of compulsion is released, the child's education must be provided for by some one who is not the child's parent. Shall the provision of this education entail any penalty on the parent? This is the final question to which the subject of free education is reduced. I believe that, hard as it may appear, this question should be answered in the affirmative, and that the penalties of pauperism should be borne by parents who cannot give their children such a first necessary as primary education. People, it is said, shrink from the cruelty of this course; they refuse to inflict further suffering on those who already have to bear so much; they will, on the contrary, alleviate distress, and do their best to supply gratuitously food, clothing, and education for the poor little children, without inflicting any disagreeable consequences on their parents. It is thus that poverty is perpetuated, and increased stores of suffering and misery are accumulated which will be borne by future generations. Such conduct does not deserve the name of real benevolence; it thinks only of the present moment, and by attempting to prevent the consequences of improvidence and reckless multiplication, it ensures their

continual repetition. "We should think it a very foolish sort of benevolence which led a surgeon to let his patient's disease progress to a fatal issue, rather than inflict pain by an operation. Similarly, we must call those spurious philanthropists, who to prevent present misery would entail greater misery on future generations."—H. Spencer, *Social Statics.*

The principal objections here urged against free education may be summarised as follows:—

1st. Compulsion is justifiable only on the assumption that primary education is as necessary to a child's mental welfare, as food and clothing are to its bodily welfare. This assumption affords no ground for making education free.

2nd. What is called "free education" is not really free. It is in reality an extravagant mode of paying for education; the operation of which is unjust and tends to discourage providence with regard to marriage.

3rd. The incidence of the education rate would most probably be borne chiefly by the working classes; it would therefore be more to their interest to pay for their children's education directly than indirectly.

4th. Free education would be an immense extension of the system of out-door relief.

Beside these there are other objections which may be advanced against free education. On moral grounds there are many reasons for believing that its influence would be pernicious. Its effect in destroying a strong motive for unselfishness and self-restraint on the part of parents has already been referred to; and it was surmised that many a father may have overcome the temptations of a public house, through the ambition to

give education to his children. In such cases who can doubt that the best sort of mutual obligation springs up between the parent and the child. The parent feels that the child has supplied him with a motive for overcoming temptations which would have had a degrading influence on his character had he yielded to them. The child in after years remembers that he owes his education to his parents, and that in order to give it to him, they made a number of little sacrifices, bore a number of small privations, and overcame many temptations. Between such parents and children there will probably be the strongest bonds of respect and affection. The mere fact of education being compulsory would not destroy these bonds. Food and clothing are compulsory, but this fact is seldom remembered either by parents or children unless other circumstances have already alienated them from each other. So would it soon be with compulsory education; it would become part of the regular order of things; the legal penalties inflicted on a parent for neglecting to educate his child would not affect the general relations between parents and children, any more than they are affected now by the penalties inflicted on parents for neglecting to maintain their children. The neglect of a child's education would come to be considered as disgraceful on the part of a parent as desertion. In this way compulsion would become, as it is in Germany, a dead letter; parents would educate their children willingly and not because they are forced to do so. Hence the obligation between parents and children would be scarcely weakened by compulsion, whereas it would receive an almost

deadly blow if education, as well as being compulsory, were free.

It has been sometimes said that the middle classes preach against free education and yet avail themselves of it whenever they have the opportunity. This is an instance of the misunderstanding that often arises from confounding classes and individuals. The middle class, as a class, have not free education; they have not, as a class, any right to have their children educated for nothing. Occasional individuals of all classes do happen to get free education for their children; but this uncertain, promiscuous, free education, is not liable to the worst evils of universal, gratuitous education. All kinds of scholarships and exhibitions are also entirely free from these evils, for they can not be counted on by parents as a means of saving their own pockets; but they are rewards of, and incentives to industry on the part of the clever children, who are thus frequently enabled to get an education which otherwise they would have been quite unable to command. Perhaps the only class who, as a class, generally look forward to get education for their sons, if not gratuitously, for considerably less than it is worth, are the clergy of the established church. This arises from the number of schools that admit the sons of clergymen on reduced terms, and from the numerous charities for providing them with free education. The cards received by subscribers to these charities, soliciting their votes, ought to be published as a warning against the evils of free education and other kinds of charitable relief. "Your votes and interest are earnestly requested on behalf of A. B.

whose father, the Rev. C. B., has 11 children and an annual stipend of £150." This may be quoted as a specimen of the kind of appeal usually made for admission to these charities.

It may be remarked, in conclusion, that should these pages be read by any of the working men who have taken a prominent part in advocating free education, I trust they will believe that the views here expressed are dictated by no spirit of hostility to the class they so ably represent. On the contrary, my opinion on the question of free education has been chiefly influenced by a consideration of what would really conduce to the permanent welfare of that class; and it is because I believe that it would not promote their prosperity, but would entail serious misfortunes upon them, would ultimately make the lives of working men and working women much harder than they now are, and would tend to depress the status of labour in its relation to capital, that I have ventured to enter this protest against so-called free education.

M. G. F.

P.S. Feb. 1872. Objections to the line of argument adopted in the foregoing pages have reached me from various quarters. My remarks on the tendency which I believe free education would have in increasing improvidence in marriage have been attacked not only by those who regard Malthus as a "gloomy misanthrope," but also by those who fully concur in all his theories on the subject of over-population and the ill effects of the Poor Law. The latter class of objectors urge that the people are already as improvident as they can be, that the school fees form so small a proportion of the cost of

bringing up children, that the effect of free education in pauperising the parent would be quite inappreciable. An argument similar to this might be urged in favour of all extensions of the Poor Law system. It might, for instance, be said that as the people cannot be more improvident than they are, no harm could come of making the poor rate a national instead of a parochial charge. This method of reasoning might also be applied to the advocacy of the complete abolition of the workhouse test. I have endeavoured to show that free education is an attempt to relieve parents from the responsibility of defraying the cost of a part of their children's maintenance. As such it is an extension of the principle of the Poor Law, unguarded however by the checks which have been from time to time devised to discourage voluntary pauperism. Can it be doubted that the tendency of such a system would be to increase improvidence, to discourage restraint, to weaken parental responsibility, and to remove one of the noblest of the mutual obligations which can exist between parents and children? To those who think that I have fallen into the error of exaggerating the pauperising effect of free education, I would merely say that I have throughout spoken of the probable effect of free education as a tendency, not as a fact. All propositions concerning the complex phenomena of social life must, as Mr Mill says, be "hypothetical only, and affirm tendencies not facts. They must not assert that something will always or certainly happen; but only that such and such will be the effect of a given cause, so far as it operates uncounteracted. It is a scientific proposition that bodily strength tends to make men courageous; not that it always makes them so: that an interest on one side of a question tends to bias the judgment; not that it invariably does so: that experience tends to give wisdom; not that such is always its effect. These propositions, being assertions only of tendencies, are not the less universally true because the tendencies may be frustrated." (*Logic*, Vol. II. p. 446.) If England were free from the plague of pauperism, there might be good reason for hoping that the independence and the thrift of the people would be strong enough to frustrate the demoralizing tendencies of free education, and that only the beneficial results of the system would be in active operation. We seem however far enough at present from this ideal state; all circumstances therefore which would tend to strengthen the causes of pauperism should be viewed with the greatest alarm. Quoting again from Mr Mill's application of logic to social science: "The aim of practical politics is to surround any given society with the greatest possible number of circum-

stances of which the tendencies are beneficial, and to remove or counteract as far as practicable those of which the tendencies are injurious" (*Logic*, Vol. II. p. 482). If, as I believe to be the case, the tendency of free education would be injurious in this country, it has yet to be shewn that there are other agencies in operation which would frustrate its pernicious influence.

IV.

PAUPERISM, CHARITY, AND THE POOR LAW*.

THE rapid increase of pauperism is a subject which at the present time has assumed an overwhelming importance. Parliament, the press, and the country urgently demand that steps should be taken to check its further development. It appears, therefore, not inappropriate to devote a few pages to the consideration of the causes which have produced the widespread poverty that exists even in the wealthiest nations.

It has been frequently asserted that there is more pauperism in England than in any other country. It is difficult, with certainty, to prove whether or not we possess this unenviable pre-eminence. Our statistical returns of misery are perhaps exceptionally accurate. It also not improbably happens that the painful impression produced by the poverty existing among us is intensified, because it is so frequently contrasted with profuse extravagance. But without expressing

* *British Quarterly*, April, 1869.

any positive opinion as to the relative amount of pauperism existing in different countries, it is sufficient to say that at the present time the pauper question is, in England, one of the gravest of economic problems.

Those of our population who need relief obtain it in two distinct ways; in the first place, any destitute person upon application has a right to demand maintenance from the poor-rates; secondly, relief is voluntarily administered by an almost countless number of private charitable institutions. We shall attempt to trace some of the effects which result from each of these systems of assisting the impoverished.

The English are the only people who have ventured to incur the grave responsibility of proclaiming that everyone possesses a legal right to be supported from the rates. The adoption of such a principle of national policy must be fraught with consequences of the utmost importance. It is evident that if the relief which can be legally claimed were administered with carelessness, or were granted too profusely, pauperism might become a desirable occupation, and the man who was supported by rates might be better off than those who lived by honest toil. If our poor-laws exerted any such influence as this, it is certain that the country would be ruined; nothing, in fact, could avert national bankruptcy. At the beginning of the century such a danger seemed impending; for poverty was steadily encouraged by the method of relief which was adopted. At that time rates were often applied in such a manner as to offer a direct reward to improvidence. It was then the custom for parochial authorities to give grants

to able-bodied labourers, if their wages were insufficient adequately to maintain them. The amount of these grants was proportioned to the number of children a man had; those, therefore, generally obtained the most who had been most improvident with regard to marriage. This system exerted much the same influence in encouraging imprudence and in stimulating an undue increase of population, as might accrue if an employer were to pay his labourers, not according to the amount of work done, but in proportion to the number of their children. These grants in aid of wages not only caused incalculable mischief, but rates when applied to such a purpose were really dishonestly appropriated; the wages of labourers were, in fact, only in part paid by those who employed them, the remainder being obtained from the ratepayers. If any one profited by the system it was the landowner; for when wages are low, farmers can afford to pay high rents. The gain, however, to the landowners was more apparent than real, because it is upon them that a considerable part of the burden of increased rates falls; and the gain, whatever it might have been in the first instance, was purchased at an enormous ultimate cost. The country is still feeling the effects of the stimulus which was then given to improvidence; and when landowners complain of the excessive rates which are now imposed, they should remember that no small portion of the poverty prevailing in the rural districts is to be traced to the encouragement to pauperism which was given by their forefathers. It is difficult to trace all the pernicious influences exerted upon the labourer by these grants in aid of wages. All inde-

pendence of character in him was destroyed; he was bound, as it were, hand and foot, to the authorities from whom he obtained a portion of his maintenance; so little freedom of action did he possess, that he might be regarded as a serf attached to the soil. A combination of evil influences was thus brought to bear to depress and degrade the labourer, and the present unsatisfactory condition of large sections of our population is a proof that the mischief arising from the old state of things has not passed away.

But pernicious as were these grants in aid of wages, there were probably other circumstances connected with our system of poor-law relief which produced even more disastrous results. It is well known that the celebrated Act of Elizabeth was our first poor-law. This Act not only conferred upon every individual a legal claim to be supported, but it also asserted a principle fraught with the most momentous consequences:—that the relief should be parochial, or, in other words, that each individual should have a claim to be supported by the parish to which he belonged. The adoption of the principle that each parish should support its own poor necessitated the passing of many complicated Acts, which sought to determine what constituted belonging to any particular parish. These Acts are known as the Laws of Settlement. In the first instance, it was affirmed that no one had a claim upon any parish except upon the one in which he was born. Parochial authorities were consequently tempted to prevent any new comer from settling in their parish; for even if they could discover the place in which he was born, they might have the expense of sending

him back to his own parish in the event of his applying for relief. The circulation of labour was thus almost prohibited, and incalculable loss was inflicted both upon employers and employed. In one district there was often a superfluity of labour, and in another district a corresponding dearth. From time to time remedial measures were attempted; thus, in the reign of William III., an Act was passed which permitted parish officers to grant certificates, stating the particular parish to which an individual was chargeable. The possessor of one of these certificates was more likely to be admitted into any parish where he was anxious to seek employment; but grave hardship was still inflicted upon the labourers; they had not the power to claim these certificates as a right, and therefore the parish authorities would often refuse to grant them, fearing that the migration of labour might tend to advance its price. It seems that no effectual remedy either was or could be applied, and Adam Smith, in his "Wealth of Nations," asserted that there was probably no artizan of forty years of age who had not suffered from the law of settlement. As time went on, more and more injury was inflicted on the country by the poor-laws. Allowances in aid of wages and recklessness in granting out-door relief were gradually pauperising the country; and the rates, which were constantly increasing, absorbed a larger portion of the profits of industry. At length it became evident that something decided must be done, and in the year 1834 a most important Act was passed, which is known as the New Poor Law. The chief characteristic of this Act was the discouragement of out-door relief. Guardians

obtained the power to refuse out-door relief altogether; if any able-bodied man, who was too lazy to work, applied for relief, the guardians could compel the applicant to become an inmate of the workhouse; and residence in the workhouse is usually regarded as a kind of imprisonment; a most powerful check was thus given to voluntary pauperism. In Ireland the principle has been carried still further, for there no out-door relief is given. The New Poor Law did little to correct the inequalities connected with the incidence of rates, and many of the grievances associated with the law of settlement remain unredressed.

The greatest inequalities in the amount of rates imposed on different localities must evidently result from carrying out the principle that each parish should support its own poor. It generally happens that the poor live in one locality, and the rich in another. Those who own the land in some of the wealthiest parishes in London virtually prohibit the residence of the poor in them; for when the land is leased to builders, the stipulation is made that none but houses of a certain character shall be built. Wealth does not like to be brought into contact with poverty; it consequently happens that in some of the richest London parishes the rates are merely nominal; and the burden of pauperism frequently falls with greatest severity upon those who are themselves verging upon pauperism.

A different kind of injustice is associated with inequality of rating in the rural districts. Land-owners often prohibit the erection of cottages on their estates; the labourers who till the land are driven into the neighbouring towns; and, if they need relief, it is

obtained not from those who profit by their labour, but from the town population. This injustice has, to a certain extent, been remedied by the Union Chargeability Bill, passed in the session of 1865, after it had been most violently opposed by the landed interest, which on that occasion was led in the House of Commons by Mr. Henley. By this bill, no parish is any longer made responsible for the support of its own poor, but the charge is borne by each Union, in which many parishes are usually comprised.

Proposals are often made to extend still further the area of chargeability; and, at the present time, there are indications that an agitation is commencing in favour of a national poor rate. There is one very powerful objection to this scheme. If the cost of pauperism were defrayed by imperial taxation, local authorities would cease to be sufficiently interested in economical administration. The amount annually expended upon pauperism would inevitably increase; but this additional outlay, although a grave evil in itself, would represent only a small portion of the injury which would be done to the nation by an undue laxity in granting relief. It will presently be shown that the poor laws, as at present administered, often give a most disastrous encouragement to improvidence; and the baneful influence thus exerted would be greatly intensified if towns and parishes felt that money lavishly given to relieve their poor would make no perceptible difference in the amount of their own taxation.

It may, however, be admitted that pauperism ought, in part at least, to be regarded as a national charge. The whole nation is responsible for the bad laws, the

unjust imposts, and the unnecessary wars, which have done so much to create and perpetuate poverty; it is therefore right that a part of the cost which this poverty entails should be borne by the nation in its aggregate capacity. It would be neither just nor wise that the whole cost should be made a national charge. Such a proposal would not be just, because poverty has often been produced, in part at least, by local circumstances which the people of each community could control. The proposal would be unwise, because it would destroy the existing guarantees for economy; and would thus, for reasons previously stated, stimulate improvidence. In accordance with the views just expressed, the relief of the poor ought to be made partly a local and partly a national charge; a certain portion, say one-third or one-half of the whole amount required, should be obtained from local rates, the remainder being provided from the imperial exchequer. This arrangement would preserve the existing guarantees for economy, would remove much of the present inequality in rating, and would practically recognise the sound and true principle, that pauperism has been produced partly by national and partly by local causes. The division of the charge in the manner just proposed would also secure another advantage. It is well known that local rates are levied upon real property only, such as land, mines, and houses. Personal property escapes these charges altogether. This system of rating probably had its origin in the opinion that land is the only source of wealth. In one sense this doctrine is true, because all the material objects which compose wealth are either directly or indirectly products of the land.

But each year a greater portion of the wealth of such a country as England exists in the form of personal property, and there is no valid reason why the owner of such personal property as Government Stock should escape all local taxation. If, however, such local expenditure as arises from pauperism were partly defrayed from the national exchequer, then personal property would at once be made to contribute; for many taxes, such as the income tax, are levied, not only upon real, but also upon personal property. Some who at the present time are most strenuously protesting against the existing system of levying rates, strangely misapprehend the incidence of taxation. Farmers, who in various chambers of agriculture express themselves vehemently on this subject, are repeating the fallacies which were current in the days of Protection. It used to be supposed that farmers were peculiarly interested in maintaining a fiscal system which was intended to make corn artificially dear; farmers either could not or would not understand that it was not the cultivator but the owner of the soil who derived profit from high prices. Similarly, farmers ought not to deceive themselves with the idea that they will ultimately appropriate to themselves the advantage which will accrue from a reduction of rates. Suppose that a farmer pays £1000 a year in rent, and that the rates upon his farm are £200; if these rates were reduced by one half, the landowner, at the expiration of the lease, would say to his tenant, 'Formerly you paid £200 a year in rates, you now pay only £100 a year, and therefore you can afford to give me an additional rent of £100.' In order to illustrate the point still further,

it may be mentioned that the tithe is usually paid by the farmer; some land however is tithe-free. Those who cultivate this tithe-free land are no better off than their brother farmers, for they pay, in the form of increased rent, an amount exactly corresponding to that which they would pay as tithe.

Although it is very desirable that poor rates should be levied with as much justice as possible, yet the subject of parochial relief is even more important in its social than in its financial aspects. A State cannot confer upon every one a legal right to be supported, without producing a great influence upon the national character; the extent and nature of this influence we will proceed to investigate. There are few who can have failed to observe, that a considerable number who obtain parochial relief have either brought poverty on themselves by improvidence and intemperance, or have not taken proper precautions to ward it off. Poor rates never reward the industrious; in fact, relief is almost forbidden to those who have done something to help themselves. Two individuals, Robinson and Smith, are fellow-workmen, earning the same wages, and each of them has a family to maintain. Robinson is thrifty, and is resolved not to be dependent upon others. Through careful saving, he sets aside enough to purchase a small annuity, upon which he maintains himself when he is too old to work. Smith is a very different man, he lives recklessly, never thinks of the morrow, is a frequenter of the public-house, and, never having saved a shilling, finds himself penniless in his old age. He therefore claims support from his parish; possibly three or four shillings a week is granted to him in the

form of out-door relief. Robinson never gets a farthing from the rates. A shilling or two a week, added to the small annuity which he has obtained by the exercise of self-denial, would give him much additional comfort and happiness; but if he ventured to make an application for such assistance, the parochial authorities would say, 'You are the possessor of an annuity, which, though small, is sufficient to keep you from starvation, and we cannot grant you a farthing from the rates.' He might reply, 'My neighbour Smith, who had in past years the same opportunity of saving as I have had, is receiving each week three shillings from the parish, and I only ask for one shilling.' The parochial authorities would virtually rejoin, 'You, Robinson, have been so prudent that you can just manage to live without any assistance from us, and therefore we shall give you nothing; your neighbour Smith has been so intemperate and so improvident that we shall support him until he dies.'

Cases analogous to the one just described are of daily occurrence; in fact, they denote a leading characteristic of our Poor Law system. Thousands, consequently, in whom it is most important to promote prudential habits, are discouraged from making any self-sacrifice, when they observe that the parish does nothing for the industrious, whereas it creates a refuge and an asylum for those who have spent their resources improvidently, or who have wasted their substance in drink. But the injustice of the system does not stop here. The working man often finds that the small savings which he has accumulated with so much difficulty are taxed and rated in order to provide support

to those who are reckless and unthrifty. Not long since we were conversing with a working-man, who, in consequence of the abolition of compounding, had just paid his first poor-rate. He had not recognised the fact that he had for a long time as a compounder made a similar though not so large a contribution to the rates in the form of increased rent. Whether this was the case or not, it was evident that our friend had been considerably aroused, for, in a tone of indignation, he remarked, "Is it not unjust that I should have to pay this money?" and then he went on to say, "Many of those who are supported by rates ought to have been better off than I am." In order to illustrate this remark he proceeded to say, "There is a neighbour of mine who, although too old for work, has to support a large young family, because he married a second time when advanced in life. This man will soon have to go upon the parish, and is it not hard that I should be taxed in order to maintain one who commits such an act of reckless folly?" Such sentiments as these not only command sympathy, but deserve most careful attention. It may, perhaps, be thought that out-door relief is so scanty, and life in the workhouse is so much dreaded, that those who become paupers really sink into this condition from circumstances which they cannot control. Some there are, no doubt, whose wages are too small to enable them to make any adequate provision against old age or sickness. Others are reduced to poverty by unforeseen and unavoidable accidents; and those who impoverish themselves are usually made intemperate and improvident by the force of early associations, and by

defective education. But admitting the truth of all this, the question still remains, "What influence have the Poor Laws in making the remuneration of some labourers so small that they cannot save sufficient to provide a maintenance for themselves in old age?" Our system of parochial relief may exert a most pernicious influence upon a man's character, although at the time when he is making an improvident marriage, or is living intemperately, he does not calculate the assistance he may derive from the rates.

The agricultural labourers afford a melancholy example of wages being so small that saving is rendered almost impossible. A married man with only 10*s.* a week is insufficiently provided with many of the necessaries of life, and if he attempted to save, he would have to deprive himself or his family of either food, fuel, or clothing, which they urgently require. But it has been previously remarked that the vicious system of granting parochial relief, which formerly prevailed in the rural districts, has done much to reduce the agricultural labourers to their present low condition. Improvident marriages were encouraged; over-population resulted; wages were reduced, and the people were thus gradually accustomed to submit to a low standard of material comfort. The improvidence has continued after many of the agencies which originally promoted it have been modified. Children imitate the example of parents, and the habits of imprudence which were fostered by the allowance system remain, although that system has ceased to exist. The helplessness and the dependence which are such characteristic faults of our rural population have been inherited from those

times when men were taught to rely more upon the parish than upon their own efforts. If the Dorsetshire labourer had more spirit and more self-reliance, he would soon insure an advance in his wages. He would not consent to drag out a miserable existence on 10*s.* a week, when he could obtain for the same kind of work in Yorkshire or in Lancashire forty or fifty per cent. more. If he had a little more knowledge and a little more enterprise, he would at once decide to emigrate if he could not live in adequate comfort in his own country.

Believing as we do that the Poor Laws have not only exerted a most baneful influence in the past, but are also at the present time offering a most serious encouragement to improvidence, the question may be asked, "Would it be wise and just to abolish the legal claim to be maintained which every one now has?" To this question it may at once be replied that, in our opinion, it would be neither wise nor just to introduce such a fundamental change precipitately. The country ought to have due warning, so that adequate preparations might be made to meet the new state of things. The abolition of parochial relief ought to be carried out gradually, and should form a part of a comprehensive scheme of social and economic reform. The condition of the people is made what it is by the operation of a great variety of agencies, which act and react upon each other; it is this which makes it so necessary that our statesmen should rely upon systematic and not upon isolated measures. To show how intimate is the connection between various social agencies, it may be sufficient to remark that ignorance is one chief cause of

poverty, and that poverty exerts a powerful influence in making the education of the people defective. As another illustration we may refer to the fact that parochial relief has done much to lower the condition of the people, and until their condition is raised, they cannot do without this relief. It would, therefore, be unwise to abolish parochial relief until agencies have been brought into operation to elevate the social condition of the country. If, for instance, it is assumed that the State will in future permit large sections of our population to grow up in ignorance, the abolition of parochial relief will, under such circumstances, be rendered impracticable. Those who are sunk in ignorance will not, as a general rule, be sufficiently provident to render themselves independent of extraneous support: for thrift and foresight imply a certain amount of moral development which rarely exists in the absence of mental cultivation. It is therefore hopeless to expect that the poor-laws can be abolished until one generation has been brought under the influence of a comprehensive system of national education.

It is well that people should, as soon as possible, be accustomed to the idea that manifold evils result from the claim which is now possessed to demand maintenance as a legal right; the abolition of this right ought therefore to be anticipated as a more than probable contingency. Unless some such warning as this is given, adequate preparations will never be made to meet the new state of things. Every man neglects a clear and important duty if he does not through life use every effort to support himself and his family by his own labour. It may be objected that many who

are sincerely anxious to discharge this duty have not the requisite means; wages are too low, employment is too uncertain, the cost of living is so great, that men even in the vigour of life find that they have nothing to spare: how then is it possible to make a provision for old age, for sickness, or for various casual misfortunes which are liable to arise from financial panics and depressed trade? But those who raise these objections should remember that vast numbers, who at the present time do not save, could save if they had the inclination to do so. Millions are annually spent, not in the purchase of a reasonable quantity of wholesome beer, but in excessive drinking. A man who works hard may be benefited by a glass of sound beer, but nearly the whole of the vast amount which is expended in spirits is money worse than wasted. If one half of the outlay thus incurred by working-men were each year set aside to purchase annuities, and if the other half were devoted to life insurance, no inconsiderable proportion of our industrial population would be able to procure a comfortable competence in old age, and would leave behind them an adequate amount to maintain their widows and others who may be dependent upon them.

The economic and social condition of England ought to be regarded as radically unsound and unsatisfactory until it becomes the custom, and not, as it is now, the exception, for working men to insure their lives, and to provide themselves with annuities for their old age. The acquisition of these habits of prudence is discouraged not only by the whole tone of public opinion, but also by the sentiments of professed moralists.

Those who aspire to be popular, and are anxious to be thought good, are never tired of proclaiming that every man has a right to live, and that the State ought to find work for those who need employment. Sympathy, moreover, is always readily extended to those who are said to be so unfortunate that they have a wife and a numerous family without anything to keep them upon. Whilst such doctrines as these obtain acceptance, wages must remain low, and pauperism will continue to afflict the land. Those who say that the State ought to find work for all who need it, should inquire from what source the State will obtain the wages to pay all those who may demand employment. The State has not inexhaustible coffers, which are kept ever full by the bounty of nature, and from which riches spontaneously flow, as from a perennial fountain. Every shilling which the State expends represents considerably more than a shilling taken from the aggregate body of tax-payers who compose the nation. It is an old saying, that taxes keep out of the pockets of the people far more than they yield to the national exchequer. It, therefore, would probably be necessary to diminish the wealth of the nation by at least £6,000,000, in order to obtain £5,000,000, as a capital wherewith to employ State labourers. Can it be supposed that capital procured in this costly way would return the ordinary rate of profit? A private business carried on under these conditions would inevitably fail. Governments have hitherto proved themselves to be the most wasteful and unsuccessful traders. Labourers would apply to the State for work, when individual capitalists could not employ them profitably; but, if

this were the case, how much less profitably could they be employed when under the comparatively irresponsible and incompetent supervision of some Government department! If the plan of giving work to all applicants were fully carried out, our industrial population would lose self-respect, and soon become demoralized; many of them would cease to attribute any consequence to a dismissal from an employer's service, for they would feel that they could always fall back upon the State. Under existing circumstances it behoves every one carefully to consider the particular nature of his own trade; in those employments which are precarious, higher wages are paid, and a portion of these extra wages ought to be set aside as a reserve fund. But what need would there be for this prudence if each individual could demand work from the State immediately his trade became temporarily depressed? It no doubt seems hard that men who are anxious to work should be compelled to remain idle. But sometimes it is necessary to act with apparent harshness, in order to prevent in the future the existence of an increased amount of human suffering. It would be well if it were more frequently remembered that the functions which the statesman has to discharge to society are often analogous to those which the physician fulfils to the individual. A surgeon who, in order to save a patient some temporary pain, hesitates to remove a source of future suffering, does not deserve to be praised as a kind man, but ought to be censured as a mischievous fool. In the same way it is equally true that a statesman who, from a sentiment of mistaken kindness, does not strive to check, but rather en-

courages the causes which produce such a social evil as pauperism, is really an enemy to mankind, although his intentions may be good and his motives excellent. Thus it would be an agreeable act of generosity to give work to all who needed it; but it is our duty firmly to resist such a policy, because it would ultimately intensify and augment the evils which in the first instance it alleviated. Men seek employment from the State when they cannot obtain it from private individuals; or, in other words, the State is appealed to when the supply of labour exceeds the demand. The State would be justified in granting this aid if, by its agency, the supply would be ultimately equalized to the demand; but such Government intervention, instead of creating this equilibrium, would in a few years widen the difference between the supply and the demand. People who cannot obtain work will very probably emigrate, and in this way a portion of the surplus labour will be drafted off. Again, those who are unemployed cannot afford to marry; statistics, in fact, conclusively prove that the number of marriages varies with the prosperity of the labouring class. The supply of labour would continue permanently to exceed the demand for it, if the State undertook to find employment for all applicants; the two sources of relief would be checked; emigration would be discouraged, and population, instead of being restrained, would be stimulated.

Some who agree with the observations which have just been made may be inclined to think that the Government ought to find employment in times of occasional depression. Few would presume to assert that in no case would such a policy be justifiable: our

object is rather to show that the cases which warrant Government interference are much less frequent than is usually supposed. Lancashire, during the Cotton famine, will be very probably considered to present a case in which the advantages of Government intervention can scarcely be disputed; but there are some considerations which ought to make us pause before we conclude that the Lancashire operatives derived any permanent benefit from the pecuniary assistance which the Government rendered them. It must be remembered that, during the American civil war, there was no marked decrease in the aggregate production of manufactured goods throughout the United Kingdom. What was lost by Lancashire was to a great extent gained by other localities; the woollen, the worsted, the jute, and the linen trades became unusually prosperous; Leeds, Bradford, Dundee, Belfast, and other towns rapidly advanced in wealth. If, therefore, affairs had been permitted to take a more natural course, a great number of the unemployed Lancashire operatives would have migrated to these localities, where their labour was particularly required. As it was, the loans obtained from Government encouraged these operatives to remain in their own county in a state of semi-starvation. The mischief thus done still continues. Lancashire had for many years more labour than she needed. It therefore appears that the policy that was pursued not only increased the sufferings of the people during the cotton crisis, but retarded the return of prosperity.

It must moreover be borne in mind that each time the Government interferes, an influence is brought into

operation which makes the people rely less upon their own efforts. It is now most painful to observe, that immediately any adverse circumstance occurs, our artizans have no reserve fund to fall back upon. England's condition cannot be satisfactory whilst so large a proportion of the working classes literally lives from hand to mouth.

We should often have to travel many miles before an agricultural labourer could be found who had saved even a few shillings; but it appears that others besides our worst-paid labourers are living in this precarious way. Paragraphs have lately (1869) appeared in the newspapers, stating that London builders, in consequence of depressed trade, were obliged to discharge many of their hands; within three days these men were parading the streets, and were asking the public to relieve their dire necessities. Misfortunes may sometimes happen, so overwhelming and so unforeseen, that those who are overtaken by them ought either to be helped by the Government or assisted by private charity. But everything ought to be done to make the people feel that they must expect such assistance only in the most exceptional cases. Private charity frequently produces a more demoralizing effect than bounties obtained from the State; those who have money to spare find it far more agreeable to give some of it away than to take the trouble carefully to investigate the purposes to which it is devoted. A man, for instance, by subscribing £1000 to some charitable society, eases his conscience, and enjoys the pleasure of seeing his act of benevolence widely advertised. If our charitable institutions were closely scrutinised, few

of them would be found to obey the maxim, that those alone ought to be helped who have striven to rely upon self-help. It often happens that the most hypocritical obtain the largest share of private benefactions; those who are too independent to beg frequently remain unaided and unnoticed. It also usually occurs that the most earnest appeals for assistance are made on behalf of those who have committed some wilful act of improvidence. There is no one, for instance, who is supposed to have so strong a claim upon public sympathy as a clergyman, who has to maintain a wife and a very large family upon an annual income of £100. Those who exert themselves to assist such a man virtually give a bribe to improvidence. If a more healthy tone of public opinion prevailed, society, instead of rewarding, would most severely condemn a man who brings children into the world without the means of adequately maintaining them.

It has been shown in a very able pamphlet by Dr Hawkesley, that the amount annually given away in charity in London is more than £5,000,000. Scarcely any part of this sum rewards the frugal and the industrious; by far the largest portion of it, by being bestowed upon the improvident, exerts a direct tendency to increase and perpetuate poverty.

At the beginning of the present year, the proprietors of the *Times* newspaper* rendered a most signal service to the public by publishing a synopsis of a great number of London charities. Mr Hicks, who so ably conducted this investigation, carefully examined the accounts of charities whose combined income ex-

* The *Times*, February 11th, 1869.

ceeds £2,000,000 annually. Some of the facts he discloses are extremely startling. The accounts of many charitable societies are so loosely kept that they are absolutely worthless; and, in many cases, a great portion of the amount annually subscribed is expended in agency and in the cost of collection. The *Times* significantly remarks: "It must be considered, in fact, condemnatory of the whole system, that a quarter of the contributions of the public should be swallowed up in agency. The charity of the public is seen flowing on all sides, but there is no reservoir, no regular channel. The stream is dissipated in little rivulets, and wasted in innumerable small conduits."

Not a few of those who give money for charitable purposes are desirous to secure some posthumous fame. They therefore decree that, for all time to come, a sum of money shall be annually given away in some particular manner with which their names shall be associated. The conditions which are imposed upon those who obtain these benefactions often exhibit the strangest freaks of folly, vanity, and superstition; old men and women receive a certain quantity of bread or money if they attend church regularly; thus tempted, poor and decrepit creatures, in the most inclement weather, drag their weary limbs to church, and sit shivering through a long service, though often they may be too deaf to hear a single word that is spoken. Some unknown person supposes that his name will be handed down to posterity as a good and pious man, because he compels people to go through this cruel farce. Sometimes almshouses are built, and, in these, men are supported who have been too improvident to save; and

in other cases a maintenance is given to widows whose husbands have been too imprudent or too self-indulgent to insure their lives. Where there is one successful applicant for this kind of relief, there are probably scores who are unsuccessful, and these live in a miserable state of suspense. The most shameful jobbery has often been associated with the administration of endowments; sometimes the trustees of charities have granted favourable leases to their friends and relations; sometimes a more petty kind of meanness has been practised;—an influential person has secured a charity for some old servant who, by rendering his master a long life of faithful service, ought to have had the strongest claims upon his private generosity. Many of these abuses have been corrected since the Charity Commissioners were appointed in 1853; but there are many grievances still remaining unredressed, and the greatest advantage would result from investigating all the charities of the kingdom, with a view of organising them according to some systematic plan.

In numerous instances, primary and secondary schools might be supported by consolidating benefactions, which now often produce far more mischief than good. The carrying out of such a policy would moreover be a practical adoption of the important principle, that no one should be permitted to decide the particular purposes to which property should be permanently devoted. When land or money is bequeathed to private individuals, a control cannot be exercised over it for more than two generations. Thus an estate may be left to any number of persons now living, and to the unborn child of the survivor; but if it were

attempted to carry the bequest to another generation, it would become illegal, and therefore void. There can be no valid reason why some limit should not be put to the control which testators are allowed to exercise over property which they leave for charitable purposes.

In the remarks which have just been made, there has been no intention to express any opposition to the exercise of charity. We have simply striven to show that gifts or bequests which are made from the kindest and most generous motives, if inconsiderately employed, often produce grave mischiefs. An individual is bound to consider carefully what will be the effects which will result from any charity which he may wish to dispense. Experience has shown that it is not always wise or safe to place implicit confidence in benevolent institutions. It ought also to be constantly borne in mind, that as it is impossible to foresee the social wants of the future, no attempt ought to be made to trammel posterity by devising rigid rules for the administration of a particular bequest.

The abuses which are associated with the administration of private charities may be thought to furnish a strong argument in favour of our Poor Law system. It may, for instance, be said, that these and kindred abuses would be greatly intensified if poverty could obtain only casual and uncertain relief, derived from private benevolence. The clever beggar and the skilful impostor would thrive upon the alms of careless and credulous donors; whereas thousands who would not beg would die from starvation, unheeded and undiscovered. It must, however, be remembered that

England is the only country in which a man can claim maintenance as a legal right. It would, perhaps, be unfair to make a comparison between England and new countries, such as the United States and Australia, which possess boundless tracts of unoccupied fertile land; but turning to the Continent, it will be found that in France and in Prussia there are no poor laws similar to our own, and these countries show that it is not necessary to have a Poor Law to prevent widespread starvation. In London, in proportion to the population, at least as many people die from want and exposure as in Paris and Berlin. Moreover, in England we suffer from the evils which result both from private and parochial relief; for although we have most burdensome poor-rates, yet at the same time there is probably no country in which so much is annually spent in private charity. In spite of all which is thus done publicly and privately, pauperism has gone on steadily increasing, until it has at length become wholly unmanageable. When any extra strain is put upon our Poor Law system it absolutely breaks down. When the Lancashire operatives were thrown out of employment during the American war, all the resources of parochial relief were exhausted in a few months. Loans of money had to be obtained from the Government, and earnest appeals were made to the whole nation for assistance. At every returning Christmas the newspapers are filled with accounts of those who are suffering the horrors of starvation; the public is entreated to relieve cases of pressing necessity. Does not all this conclusively prove that our Poor Law system fails to reach thousands who most need assistance?

All these evils cannot be eradicated in a day; but we should at any rate attempt to introduce a new state of things when it is seen that the policy which is now pursued does not destroy or even check, but on the contrary stimulates, pauperism. As we have before said, the change should be brought about gradually, for people who have been reared on the existing system of relief ought not at once to be subjected to an entirely different treatment.

Without pretending fully to detail the new policy which ought to be adopted, it is not difficult to suggest some things which should be done. It has frequently been proved that a comprehensive scheme of national education would exert a most powerful influence in diminishing pauperism. It might also be shown that a similar influence would be exerted upon pauperism by the effect which will be produced on poverty by various other circumstances; such as the improvement of the relations between capital and labour; the reform of the tenure of land; the reduction of taxation; the extension of free-trade; and the encouragement of emigration. Associated with the working of all these beneficial agencies, it is most important that some changes in the present Poor Law system should be immediately carried out.

It is unnecessary to allude again to the great inequality in the present mode of levying the rates; enough has been already said upon this subject. It is now our intention to discuss some of the evils which are associated with the prevailing method of administering relief. Nothing demands more serious consideration than the vast and increasing amount which is spent in

granting out-door relief. One of the most significant returns which has ever been issued from a Government department has lately been published by the Poor Law Board. From this it appears that the sum annually expended in London for out-door relief has increased 130 per cent. during the last nine years. If such a state of things should continue, the resources of the metropolis will soon become exhausted by pauperism. Some attribute this increase of 130 per cent. to extravagant management. If this were the true explanation it would not be difficult to apply a remedy, but there are no facts to warrant the conclusion that Poor Law guardians are less economical now than they were nine years since. This augmentation in out-door relief has been produced by causes much more serious in their consequences; the augmentation, in fact, proves that pauperism begets pauperism, if relief is administered in such a way as to encourage rather than to check improvidence. Out-door relief is now often given as a grant in aid of wages, and thus many of the evils of the allowance system are unconsciously revived under a somewhat different aspect; men do not now, as formerly, receive assistance from the rates when they are in full work; but if there should be any cessation of employment they immediately seek, and generally obtain, some assistance from the parish. In many kinds of labour it is necessary occasionally to suspend work; the wages which are paid in these employments represent, not only a remuneration for work which is actually done, but also a compensation for the time when labour has to be suspended. The improvident spend week by week all that they receive, and they

are encouraged to do so by the knowledge that the parish will assist them when employment ceases. In Ireland, out-door relief is rarely granted, and this is a precedent which may probably be with great advantage followed in this country; but those who may not be prepared immediately to abolish out-door relief must recognise the importance of restricting it within the narrowest possible limits.

From time to time proposals have been made that we should resort to emigration, in order to free ourselves from pauperism. An Act was passed a few years since which confers upon Poor Law guardians the power to pay from the rates the passage-money of those who may be willing to emigrate. This Act has hitherto been almost nugatory; it has, in fact, been applied only in three or four parishes. There are two very different aspects from which the subject of pauper emigration may be viewed: in the first place, a right may be conferred on every individual to demand the requisite means to enable him to emigrate; secondly, parochial authorities may have the power to compel an applicant for relief to emigrate. The only argument which can be urged against the last proposal is, that foreign countries may object to be made the receptacle of our pauperism; in fact the United States have already protested against it. Very cogent reasons can, however, be assigned against the adoption of the first proposal. Improvidence would be encouraged in all its worst forms if men could not only claim maintenance, but could also demand the payment of their passage-money, if they should desire to emigrate. The carrying out of such an arrangement would give additional

encouragement to imprudent marriages and reckless living. Every man would feel that if he could not get on in his own country, he would be able to make others pay the expense of sending him and his family to any colony in which they might choose to settle. The number of applicants for emigration would go on steadily accumulating; the place of those who left would be quickly reoccupied; and the cost of carrying out this policy would rapidly augment. It is extremely probable that a great additional burden would be cast upon the rates if people could claim to be sent abroad; for not only would improvidence be encouraged, but a considerable portion of our emigrants who now provide their own passage-money would then compel parochial authorities to pay it.

As we have frequently insisted upon the duty which is imposed upon every individual to provide as far as possible against old age and sickness, it is important to point out the best mode of securing such a provision. A man may protect himself and his family against all the casualties to which he can be ordinarily subject by joining friendly societies, by purchasing annuities, and by life insurance. In our country, the most important friendly societies are the trades' unions; this fact is often completely ignored by those who regard trades' unions as being necessarily associated with strikes. It could be shown that the objects which a friendly society has in view probably suggested the first formation of these combinations, and the connection which now so often exists between trades' unions and strikes is rather accidental than preconceived. A member of a trade's union receives a certain weekly allowance when thrown

out of work by depressed trade, and also when disabled by sickness or by accident. A trade's unionist, as long as the funds of his society will permit, is to a great extent independent of parochial relief. It is an unknown occurrence for an able-bodied workman who belongs to a prosperous union, such as the 'Amalgamated Engineers,' to apply to the parish authorities for assistance. This emancipation from dependence upon rates has produced most beneficial effects, and it probably accounts for the fact which is admitted by the strongest opponents of trades' unions, that our best and most intelligent workmen almost invariably belong to these societies.

Though trades' unions render a man independent of parochial assistance whilst he is an able-bodied labourer, something else is required to secure him a provision in old age. Far greater facilities for doing this exist since Mr Gladstone passed his admirable scheme for the creation of small annuities. As yet these annuities have excited little attention, but when their advantages are fully appreciated they will be ranked as among the most beneficial measures which we owe to Mr Gladstone. By the deposit of a small weekly sum, a man is able to secure a certain income, to commence at a time of life when it may be reasonably calculated that work will have to be discontinued. A Government guarantee makes these annuities perfectly secure. This feeling of absolute security will powerfully stimulate prudential habits on the part of working-men. One chief reason why, as a class, they have not saved, has been the difficulty they have had in finding safe and suitable investments. There have

been repeated exposures of shameful dishonesty practised by those who have been the concoctors of societies for granting small annuities: one instance of such dishonesty produces a widespread influence in encouraging improvidence; for people will think that they might as well spend all that they have, when they observe that some friend or neighbour has lost all that has been put together through many years of careful saving. It therefore appears that by subscribing to friendly societies, and by the purchase of an annuity, every working-man may make himself independent of parochial relief. If he insures his life, he then secures a provision for his wife and family in the event of his dying prematurely. There must, however, be a fundamental change in the condition of our industrial population before they acquire not only the means but also the inclination to set aside a sufficient sum from their weekly earnings to make all those provisions which have been just described.

It may be proved from simple economic considerations that the power to save possessed by the working-classes increases in a direct ratio with their desire to save. The remuneration which labour receives varies directly with the amount of capital accumulated, and inversely with the number of the labouring population. Capital is the fund from which wages are paid; if, therefore, this fund increases, whilst population remains stationary, it is evident that there will be a greater demand for labour, and, consequently, it will obtain a larger remuneration. On the contrary the wages of labour will diminish, if the number of the labouring population increases in a faster ratio than capital.

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People who are accustomed to a comparatively high standard of comfort naturally feel a disinclination to sacrifice it by improvident marriages. A professional man does not, for instance, as a general rule, marry, until he feels that he has a reasonable chance of being able to give his children at least as good an education, and also as many comforts, as he has himself enjoyed. But these prudential restraints exert much less influence upon those who are so poor that they feel they have little to sacrifice. It is notorious that the Irish peasantry, when sunk in the depths of poverty, married with utter recklessness. The Irish cottier was always hopelessly in debt to his landlord; he therefore knew that having a large family to maintain could make him no poorer, for just sufficient potatoes must be left to enable him and his children to live. Many of our poorest labourers are nearly as improvident as the Irish; prudential considerations never restrain them from marrying: their material condition is such that they feel they have nothing to lose; and their life being devoid of hope, they think they have nothing to sacrifice in the future. It is impossible for those who act in this manner to achieve any material advance. The pressure of population must reduce their wages to a minimum, and hence there is always a large class who are receiving only just sufficient wages to provide them with a bare subsistence. The great end to be attained is to raise the condition of one generation so much as to make them feel that they possess something which is worth preserving, and which therefore they will not sacrifice by improvidence. If our labouring population should advance to a much higher standard of living,

they would be as anxious as professional men now are that their children should not sink to a lower position. When such prudential considerations as these become prevalent, working-men would be anxious to protect themselves and their families against such casualties as sickness, loss of employment, and premature death, by subscribing to friendly societies, by purchasing annuities, and by life insurance.

Labourers who desire to advance their condition must constantly find their progress impeded by our Poor Law system. Not only do parochial rates press heavily upon them, but the relief which is given to pauperism acts most powerfully to reduce wages. Improvidence is encouraged by the assistance which is given to poverty, and improvidence is the main reason why wages are low. It often, also, happens that pauper labour comes into direct competition with free labour. As an illustration it may be mentioned that the Manchester guardians have lately made able-bodied paupers grind corn by hand. Let us see what this plan, which has been almost unanimously approved, really involves. A tax is imposed upon the industrial population of Manchester; a portion of the proceeds of this tax is appropriated to employ labour in a most costly, unproductive, and wasteful way. Labour which is reluctantly given can never be efficient, and these paupers who grind corn by hand are doing that which could be done far cheaper and far better by machinery. The granting of relief to able-bodied labourers is conclusively condemned when we are obliged to admit that there is no better mode of employing them than that which has been adopted by the Manchester guardians.

There is only one other subject to which allusion need be made before concluding these remarks. One fruitful source of pauperism is the position which women occupy in this country. Social customs and legal enactments combine to discourage women of every class from earning their livelihood. The influences which deter women from gaining their own maintenance assume various forms. Women in the upper and middle classes are told that if they attempt to employ their labour productively they unsex themselves and destroy those graces and charms which peculiarly fit them for married life. Those women who wish to support themselves by manual labour often meet with a different kind of opposition; sometimes they are impeded by the rules of trades' unions; sometimes they find that laws have been passed prohibiting them from certain kinds of work. This opposition, though exhibited in various forms, is probably mainly due to the selfishness of the stronger sex. Women should have the same opportunity as men to follow any profession, trade, or employment to which they desire to devote their energies. Our law gives such inadequate protection to the property of married women that they are not unfrequently robbed with impunity by a cruel and profligate husband. It is difficult for industry to struggle against a combination of such unfavourable circumstances; it is not, therefore, surprising that women's labour, thus degraded, is poorly remunerated, and that comparatively few women have an opportunity of earning their own living by manual labour. As long as women remain in this state of helplessness, it is evident that they will frequently depend for support upon parochial

relief. It is now, in fact, almost assumed as a matter of course, that upon the death of a labouring man his widow immediately comes upon the parish; yet, in spite of this melancholy fact, proposals are frequently made that Parliament should impose further restrictions upon the employment of women. If it is found that the women engaged in any particular kind of work are in an unsatisfactory condition, some well-intentioned persons instantly suggest that this work should be forbidden to them by law. There is scarcely any labour which is necessarily degrading. At any rate, a life of dependent pauperism must be far more pernicious than honest industry. It has been repeatedly shown that women need not suffer any injury from work which is supposed to be degrading in its influence. No one, for instance, can deny that in many parts of England the women who are employed in agriculture are in a most unsatisfactory condition; their wages are extremely small; they are poorly and unsuitably clothed, and often, driven into the fields by the pressure of poverty, they work when they ought to be attending to home duties. Many who observe these evils are anxious that Parliament should prohibit the employment of women in agriculture; but if the labour is differently carried on, it is proved that women suffer no evils, but are benefited by working in the fields.

Mr Henley, one of the Commissioners recently appointed to inquire into the condition of women and children employed in agriculture, has given a most interesting account of the rural population of Northumberland. When his description of these Northumberland labourers is compared with the distressing ac-

counts which are given of the peasantry in other parts of England, it is difficult to believe that the Dorsetshire and Northumberland labourers are inhabitants of the same country. The latter earn good wages; they live well but frugally; fuel is cheap; and their houses are clean and commodious. At particular seasons of the year the women of the family work in the fields; but home duties are never neglected. The women being well and suitably clothed, their out-door labour is beneficial to them, for they generally appear in the most robust health. Their close contiguity to Scotland seems to have given these peasants a certain enthusiasm for education. Good schools are abundant, and the children are generally kept at them until they are twelve or thirteen years of age. Facts such as these should make us hesitate before we sanction any measure which would compel women to be even more dependent than they now are.

Briefly summarising our previous remarks, it will be sufficient in conclusion to say that the following remedies are among those upon which we think chief reliance should be placed to diminish pauperism:—The curtailment and gradual abolition of out-door relief; the introduction of a complete system of national education; the re-organisation of charitable bequests, and an improvement in the industrial position of women. We can but repeat that in our opinion the efficacy of all social reforms may, in a great degree, be measured by the extent to which they induce the people to rely more upon self-help, and less upon State assistance and private charity.

H. F.

V.

THE REGULATION OF THE HOURS OF LABOUR BY THE STATE*.

THE remarks which it is my intention to make on the above subject have been confirmed in a very striking manner by the recent success of the Nine Hours' movement. The artisans in no previous dispute between Capital and Labour have ever obtained so signal a triumph. Early in August, 1871, the engineers of Newcastle formally put forward the demand that a day's work should consist of nine hours. The masters refused to yield. The workmen thereupon carried out their threat to desist from work; and a general strike ensued. Although efforts at conciliation were repeatedly made, the dispute continued to rage fiercely for many weeks. Various persons offered themselves as mediators, in the hope of suggesting some compromise. But compromise after compromise was unceremoniously rejected by the masters. Many circumstances combined to arouse strong and angry feelings. At the outset a bitter personal enmity had been excited by the workmen being told that the

* Lecture delivered in the University of Cambridge.

masters would not hold interviews with them, but that they must have their views represented by some legal adviser. Still more angry passions were aroused when the manufacturers attempted to replace the labour of which they had been deprived, by the importation of foreign workmen. Agents were despatched to Belgium, Germany, and other places to engage at remunerative wages artisans who had been accustomed to engineering work. The English workmen on their side put forth equally strenuous efforts to check this importation of labour. Strong appeals based on international principles were addressed to the continental workmen; they were entreated to be loyal to the cause of labour, and they were told that the employed would be always vanquished unless the labourers of different countries were not only ready to unite, but were also prepared to make some sacrifices for the common cause. In spite, however, of all these efforts the manufacturers obtained a considerable number of continental workmen. After their arrival, however, not a single moment was lost in bringing every possible kind of pressure to bear upon them to induce them to return. Occasionally the pressure assumed the form of threats of violence to any who might continue to work. Such threats, however, were exceptional; it was generally found that after the exact position of affairs had been explained to these foreign workmen, there was little difficulty in inducing them to return to their own countries if they were provided with the requisite funds. The funds required for this purpose were promptly procured by subscriptions raised among the artisans in every important centre of

English industry. In consequence of these exertions the manufacturers gradually became convinced that it was hopeless for them to expect to keep their works open by substituting foreign for English labour. The alternative therefore which was presented to them was either to suspend business or to grant the demands of those whom they employed. The adoption of the former course involved many formidable difficulties. It has been often remarked that workmen in the disputes which they have had with their employers have very generally shown themselves to be extremely bad tacticians. They have generally struck work in order to resist a decline in wages consequent upon dull trade. But when trade is dull the victory of the employer is almost insured, for at such a period it costs him little—in fact, it is often a positive advantage to him—temporarily to suspend his business. But, whether from accident or design, the Newcastle workmen commenced the Nine Hours' Movement at the very time above all others when they were most likely to obtain success. The engineering trade was in a state of unprecedented activity and prosperity; unusually large profits were being realised, and the order book of every manufacturer was filled with lucrative contracts. Victory therefore was virtually ensured to the employed when they deprived the employer of an adequate supply of labour; for he had the strongest possible inducement not to curtail, much less to suspend his business at a time when it was exceptionally profitable, and when the non-fulfilment of extensive contracts would render him liable to extremely onerous fines. After a struggle which was prolonged for four-

teen weeks, the masters were compelled to succumb; and the demands put forward by the workmen were fully conceded to them. No sooner was the Nine Hours' Movement successful in the engineering trade at Newcastle, than similar demands were immediately put forward by workmen engaged in a great variety of trades in different parts of the country. The battle having been once fairly fought out, employers very generally adopted the wise and prudent conclusion that it was far better not to renew the contest. It has therefore come to pass that in a few weeks, throughout no inconsiderable portion of the industry of the country, the principle has obtained practical recognition that nine hours is to be considered a day's work.

I have thought it important to give this description of the Nine Hours' Movement in order to show that in the course of a few weeks the workmen, entirely relying on their own efforts, and without any resort to State intervention, have secured a valuable concession for themselves, and have introduced a most important social and economic reform. Having thus seen what has been done without resorting to the State, let us proceed to inquire whether the workmen would have secured that which they desired more promptly and more efficiently if, instead of relying on their own efforts and their own powers of organization, they had rested their hopes on State intervention. If the latter course had been adopted, I think there will be little difficulty in showing that the shortening of the hours of labour might be either indefinitely postponed or might be so prematurely and inconsiderately introduced that confusion would be created and more

evil than good would result. If the workmen throughout the country should unite they would at once secure a predominance of power in the legislature. Let it be supposed that having gained this predominance they should at once pass a law applying the Nine Hours' principle to every employment throughout the country. As explained in a previous essay*, such legislative interference constitutes a part of the programme of the International; and as there is reason to believe that many who are generally opposed to the doctrines of Socialism would support such a demand, the subject is evidently one of great practical importance at the present time.

It will scarcely be denied by any one who has practical knowledge of trade that various employments differ so greatly in the circumstances and conditions upon which they are carried on, that the general application of a rigid rule as to the length of a day's work would produce the most inconvenient and incongruous results. Some kinds of labour are, for instance, far more exhausting and injurious to health than others. Six hours spent in an imperfectly ventilated mine probably involve a greater amount of fatigue, and cause a greater strain upon the constitution, than ten hours passed in some out-door occupation, or in some delicate and skilled handicraft. Then, again, in an industry such as agriculture, a day's work cannot exceed a certain number of hours during the winter, whereas during a few weeks in the summer or autumn, when the harvest is gathered in, a considerable portion of the crop would often be lost if men were legally prohibited from

* See page 22.

working more than nine hours a day. In answer to these objections, it will probably be urged that the legislature might provide for the different circumstances of various employments; and that it is not proposed to fix an absolute limit of nine hours to the day's work, but simply to enact that all work done beyond this shall count as overtime, and be liberally paid for accordingly. With regard to the first of these pleas it is sufficient to remark, that it would be necessary for the legislature to acquire an amount of administrative skill which it has never before shown any signs of possessing, in order to frame a measure which, whilst making proper allowance for the varying circumstances of different trades, would fix an appropriate limit to the day's work in each particular branch of industry. The second plea, however, is that upon which the advocates of a law for shortening the hours of labour chiefly rest their case. During the agitation that has recently taken place throughout the country in favour of the Nine Hours' Movement, it has been made perfectly clear that those who advocate the shortening of the day's work do not contemplate the passing of any enactment to forbid a man working beyond a specified time. It is evident that such a law would be strongly resisted by the workmen who favour the Nine Hours' Movement. At Newcastle and other places, they always showed great anxiety to secure a recognition of the principle that overtime was to be paid for upon a liberal scale. It certainly, however, seems to me that in thus sanctioning overtime, every argument which might be advanced in favour of regulating the hours of labour by State intervention falls to the ground. The law might be

so easily evaded and ignored, that it would soon be regarded as a useless and ridiculous farce. Suppose, for instance, the legislature should say that in a certain trade, such as building, a day's work should consist of only nine hours. Employers and operatives who desired to continue work for a longer time would not have the slightest difficulty in doing so. They would simply have to consider each hour beyond the specified period as overtime, and the law would consequently be as completely inoperative as if it had never been passed.

It may, however, be said, that the argument just advanced rests on the assumption that the employed are willing to work overtime, whereas it may be maintained that a law is needed for the protection of those who are coerced to work for an excessive number of hours. In the first place, there are many reasons which may make us feel incredulous about such coercion being resorted to; in the second place, it may be maintained that if workmen are thus coerced it is their own fault, because it has been frequently shown that they are perfectly well able to offer successful resistance if they choose to do so. It is impossible to have a more striking illustration of the power possessed by the workmen than is afforded by the completeness of the triumph which they recently obtained at Newcastle. Sometimes, however, it is urged that although workmen cannot be forced to labour for an excessive number of hours, if they are resolutely resolved not to do so, yet it is maintained that there are some workmen who do not know what is good for themselves and their class; and that there are others who, if they do know

it, have not the courage to act in a manner which is right. Consequently State intervention is needed for those who are thus weak and erring. This is the old story; this is, in fact, what State interference generally comes to. Certain persons arrogate to themselves infallibility of judgment—assume that they know the precise course which ought to be adopted, and the exact thing which ought to be done by every human being; they consequently appeal to the State to give them the power to make each individual conform his life to the pattern which has been chosen by their faultless judgment. If these doctrines are sanctioned, and if these demands are conceded, individual liberty and freedom of action will cease to exist, and we shall have to submit to a thraldom more galling and more degrading than the worst form of political despotism. It will be impossible to foresee from day to day what we shall each one of us in private life be permitted to do, and what we shall not be permitted to do. The State is not unfrequently spoken of as if it were a receptacle of the most perfect justice, the noblest benevolence, the most far-seeing sagacity, and the highest wisdom. The State, however, even in a country like our own which possesses representative institutions, instead of being endowed with all these qualities of superhuman excellence, embodies nothing more than the fluctuating and shifting opinions which are held by the majority of a majority of the constituencies. It is no doubt customary to speak of the collective wisdom of the legislature; but such a phrase is obviously misapplied when it is remembered in what manner the two branches of the legislature in this country are se-

lected. The hereditary principle is the chief method of supplying vacancies in the one House; and the members of the other House need not be the wisest and best men in the country, but they must, in almost every instance, be those who are willing and able to pay a very considerable sum in order to represent the opinions of some local majority. The legislature cannot therefore have any claim to the possession of an amount of collective wisdom which enables it to form an unerring judgment as to the mode of life which ought to be followed by each individual. It can, in fact, scarcely be denied that law-making is in this, as in other nations, carried on by persons who have not a greater amount of virtue, sagacity, and wisdom, than ordinarily falls to the lot of the average of their fellow countrymen. Those therefore who are constantly appealing to the State to meddle in the affairs of private life seem to forget that the carrying out of this policy virtually obliges people to surrender their freedom of action to a predominant majority which cannot be expected to possess higher qualities than the units of which it is made up.

It is necessary to consider the subject from this point of view, in order adequately to appreciate the injustice which would be sanctioned if a law were passed fixing the length of the day's work, and if many other demands for State interference were conceded which are now being pressed with such frequency and urgency. Those who thus propose to enlarge the scope of State intervention are no doubt very confident in the belief that they know what is right, and they wish to call in the power of the law to coerce people into

right doing. A teetotaller finds that he has derived great advantage from abstaining from all alcoholic drinks; and in order that others may participate in the advantage, he would like to see every one forced to do as he has done. It never seems to strike him that there can be any tyranny in resorting to State intervention; he, on the contrary, would think it was the most exalted kind of benevolence to force people to do that which he believes is certain to prove beneficial to them. Ideas exactly analogous to these prompted the cruellest religious persecutions of the Middle Ages. Those who persecuted were very confident that they knew which was the road that led to Heaven. If they observed people persistently straying away, it seemed that it was justifiable to resort to any means to force them back into the right path. Bodily torments were not worth considering when it was a question between eternal happiness and eternal perdition. Such sentiments as these are not extinct; they have, in fact, lost little of their former vitality; they are constantly coming into activity in other forms and other aspects. As it has been in the past, so will it probably be in the future. Individual liberty will be constantly subject to attacks from various phases of fanaticism. We have not only to be on our guard against the extreme socialists of the International, but similar dangers may any day be brought upon us by well-intentioned philanthropists and mistaken enthusiasts. Already it has been rumoured that a Bill will be brought into Parliament declaring that no operative shall work in a cotton mill for more than nine hours a day. In support of such a proposal the old arguments

will be, no doubt, repeated. If it is urged that a man who is willing to work for ten or eleven hours a day should be permitted to do so, it will be thought sufficient to say in reply that it is evident such a man does not know what is good for himself, and that others who do know are performing an act of kindness if they debar him from pursuing a course which will prove injurious to him. If private life is to be thus interfered with, where is such interference to end? Analogous reasoning would lead to the conclusion that the State should decree the quantity of food and drink which a man should consume, the number of hours that he should be permitted to study, and the amount of exercise he should be allowed to take. Other forms of excess may be as injurious as over-work, and if it is right for the State to protect people against an undue amount of labour, might it not be legitimate to protect them against the evils resulting from undue eating and drinking, from over-fatigue and over-study.

It is, however, probable that motives very different from these actuate many who most earnestly appeal to the State to impose a legal limit upon the day's work. This particular movement may be, to a great extent, regarded as a revival of the old fallacy that the wages of labour can be regulated by law. Signs are not wanting to show that the opinion widely prevails, although it is rarely distinctly avowed, that if a law were passed reducing the day's work from ten hours to nine hours, as much would ultimately be paid for nine as for ten hours' labour. If, however, this should prove to be the case, then it would appear that the State has the power to regulate the remuneration of labour; it

would consequently follow that wages depend upon legal enactments, and are not regulated by the recognised principles of economic science. I shall not attempt to argue the case by referring to such well-known facts as that Parliament for centuries tried to control the wages of labour, and that all the numberless statutes that were passed to effect this object signally failed. Neither shall I refer to the general principles of political economy to establish the conclusion that the wages of labour cannot be controlled by the State. Such reasoning would not, in any way, affect the opinions of those who are most strongly in favour of the hours of labour being regulated by the State. According to their views the interposition of the State in this matter involves very different consequences, and is to be defended by very different arguments from any attempt which may be made to fix the rate of wages by Act of Parliament. The following may be considered a correct description of the opinions which are widely held on this subject. It is maintained that in many employments the day's work is a great deal too long, the strain upon the constitution is too severe, and physical strength is so much exhausted that a man is unable to labour hard during the whole time he is at work. It is therefore urged that if the day's labour were shortened, as much or even more work would be done in the shorter as in the longer period; employers would, consequently, be able to pay at least as much for a day's work after its length had been thus shortened. Many facts can, no doubt, be adduced in support of this opinion. It can be scarcely denied that in some employments the hours of labour are habitually too long. Some very

striking examples can be quoted to show that the shortening of the hours of labour confers a most important advantage both upon employers and employed. More work is done in less time, and the greater productiveness which is thus given to labour enables not only the wages of the workmen, but also the profits of the employer, to be increased.

Amongst many remarkable examples of the truth of this statement, it will be sufficient to refer to one case which is mentioned by Mr Macdonnell, in his "Survey of Political Economy." He states, on the authority of M. Chevalier, that a manufacturer employing 4000 hands reduced his spinners' time one half-hour per day, and that this reduction, contrary to all expectation, was accompanied by an increase in production of one-twenty-fourth. An admission that this fact is typical of what would generally take place if the hours of labour were shortened, would undoubtedly afford a powerful inducement and a strong justification to the workmen to extend throughout the country the movement which was commenced at Newcastle. Such an admission, however, does not, to my mind, supply any argument in favour of a resort being had to State intervention. It has been proved that the workmen can succeed when they have as good a case to urge as they had at Newcastle; and the masters would, in every instance, be compelled to yield, even were it not their interest to do so, when facts can be adduced to warrant the conclusion that the hours of labour prevalent in any particular trade are too long to secure the maximum of industrial efficiency. But the point on which I particularly desire to insist is this: Are not the

circumstances peculiar to each trade best known to those who are engaged in it, and are they not, consequently, in a far better position to judge of the number of hours of labour appropriate to it than the heterogeneous assembly called the State?

It must be also borne in mind that a grave risk is always associated with legislative interference with trade; it is not simply a question of taking something from the pockets of the employer and adding it to the wages of the employed; unwise and misdirected meddling on the part of the State may so much impede industrial development as to bring ruin upon a trade, and thus masters and men will be involved in a common disaster. Formerly each country was, in its industrial position, far more isolated from its neighbours than at the present time. Inferior means of communication and prohibitory tariffs powerfully impeded commercial intercourse. As commercial relations between different countries have extended, a keen and closely-contested competition has arisen between them in various branches of industry. The competition is, in fact, frequently so close that a country may often lose a trade if it is hampered with legislative restrictions which are not imposed upon it in other countries. At the present time it is difficult in many branches of industry for the English manufacturer to compete with the foreigner even in our own markets. England can now scarcely hold her own in some trades in which she once had almost undisputed supremacy. When railways were first introduced, nearly every locomotive engine throughout Europe was of English manufacture. Not only do many continental countries now make their own engines, but it occa-

sionally happens that foreign engines are to be found on our own railways. There are, no doubt, many trades in the position just described; but, when this is the case, it is obvious that a country may not only be driven from a foreign market, but may also find it impossible to retain a satisfactory position in the home market if restrictions are imposed upon her which either interfere with industrial efficiency, or artificially increase the cost of production. It must be perfectly obvious that the length of the day's work may be unduly reduced; in fact, the reduction may be carried so far as most seriously to impede industry. Encouraged by the success of the nine hours' movement, it is beginning to be said in certain quarters that there should be an agitation in favour of the day's work consisting of only eight hours. This is, in fact, one part of the programme of the International. If successful in an eight hours' agitation, an agitation might commence in favour of fixing the day's work at seven or even at six hours. If, however, such restrictions were imposed, it can scarcely be doubted that industry would be placed in so unfavourable a position that it would be hopeless for England to attempt to compete with foreign countries. It might thus happen that not only her foreign trade would be sacrificed, but she would be undersold in her own markets. It is not too much to say that her commercial prosperity would cease, and that a fatal blight would be thrown upon her industry. Employers would not continue business under such unfavourable conditions. If men were only permitted to work six or seven hours a day, machinery would be lying idle for so long a period that the returns

yielded to its owner would be greatly reduced. The diminution in profits might be so serious that employers might think it to their interest to take their capital out of business, and either invest it in some other security or apply it to the carrying on of some industrial undertaking in a country which was not subjected to such legislative interference. The workmen might thus find that an undue limitation in the number of hours of labour had ruined many branches of industry; and had thus brought upon them the greatest disasters.

In making these remarks I should much regret if it were thought that I did not most entirely sympathize with those who desire to see a great diminution in the excessive toil of so many of our workmen. There is nothing perhaps more to be regretted than the fact that extraordinary commercial prosperity and an unprecedented accumulation of wealth have hitherto done so little to shorten the workmen's hours of labour. As previously remarked, the undue length of time which men have been accustomed to work represents, so far as many branches of industry are concerned, a thoroughly mistaken policy. In many instances it is undeniable that men would not only get through more work, but would do it more efficiently, if they had more opportunity for mental cultivation and for healthful recreation. No small part of the intemperance which is laid to the charge of our labourers is directly to be traced to excessive toil. When strength becomes exhausted, and the body is over fatigued, there often arises an almost uncontrollable desire to resort to stimulants. Again, it is unreasonable to expect that the moral qualities in man's nature can be duly developed,

if life is passed in one unvarying round of monotonous work. We are constantly being reminded of the ennobling and elevating influence produced by contemplating the beauties of nature, by reflecting on the marvels which science unfolds, and by studying the triumphs of art and literature. Yet no inconsiderable portion of the toiling masses are reared in such ignorance, and surrounded from early childhood to old age by so much squalor and misery, that life could be to them scarcely more dreary or depressing, if there were no literature, no science, and no art, and if nature had no beauties to unfold. At a meeting recently held at Newcastle by some of the prominent advocates of the nine hours' movement, artisans were encouraged to look forward to a time when the condition of labourers generally throughout the country would be so much improved that they would have time for mental cultivation and various kinds of recreation; a hope was even expressed that the day might come when they and their families would be able to enjoy an annual holiday, gaining health and vigour either from the sea breeze or the mountain air. It is, however, particularly to be remarked, that those who shadowed forth these bright anticipations showed no tendency whatever to seek State intervention. The leaders of the nine hours' movement at Newcastle, having won a great triumph, have just confidence in their own powers; they truly feel that what they have done might also be done by others, and they therefore object to the demands for State interference, which are constantly being put forward by the members of the International, and by many other workmen. The speeches, to which I have

just referred, were delivered at a meeting of the members of a co-operative engineering company. This society had grown out of the nine hours' dispute. The leaders of the movement, having once learnt the invaluable lesson of self-help, had the practical wisdom to see that the best way to emancipate themselves from what the International calls the tyranny of capital is not to indulge in idle declamation, nor to embark in schemes which are either impracticable or mischievous. They, on the contrary, came to the conclusion that if they wished to render themselves independent of capitalists they might do so by supplying the capital which their own industry requires. They have had little difficulty in gathering together a sufficient amount of money to commence business on their own account. There is no reason why an establishment thus founded should not gain as great a commercial success as that which has been achieved by any private firm. Even if it should fail, there would be no grounds to feel discouraged. The experience which is obtained from failure often enables the road to be discovered which leads to future success. But whatever may be the fate of this particular experiment, there will still be good ground for the belief that the spirit of self-reliance displayed by these Newcastle workmen will not only do much to improve the lot of the labourer, but will act more powerfully than any other agency to promote the general well being of the whole community.

H. F.

VI.

NATIONAL DEBTS AND NATIONAL PROSPERITY*.

It is remarkable to observe with how little uneasiness the fact is regarded that with two exceptions every leading nation in Europe is habitually spending more than its income. If a similar fact were known with regard to individuals, no one would doubt that their bankruptcy must ultimately ensue; but few people seem to anticipate so disagreeable a fate for France, Russia, Austria, and Italy. A few months ago the financial position of France was indeed regarded as rather serious; but the manner in which the war indemnity loan of eighty millions was taken up seems to have dispelled all these gloomy forebodings. A slight investigation into the financial affairs of France will illustrate how far this confidence is justified, and will perhaps show that so far from being a token of the healthiness and elasticity of French finance, the eagerness with which the loan was subscribed may be a sign of the most serious national

* Macmillan's Magazine, Jan., 1872.

difficulties. It must be remembered that the debt of France, including the war indemnity, now amounts to £1,100,000,000. When Napoleon III. ascended the throne of France the debt was only £245,250,000; but since the accession of that sovereign, whose services to the material prosperity of France are always quoted as if they were quite undeniable, the debt of France, by continued deficits, by wars, and lastly by the German indemnity, was raised to its present enormous total of eleven hundred millions of pounds sterling. Thus in a reign of eighteen years the average annual increase of the debt of France was more than £47,000,000. Exclusive of the war indemnity, the average annual increase of the debt under the Second Empire was £18,500,000, a larger average per year than England borrowed during the Crimean war. From tables published in the "Statesman's Year Book" showing the actual receipts and expenditure, from the establishment of the Empire to the year 1863, it may be seen that while the ordinary revenue increased from £59,000,000 to £90,000,000, the expenditure in the same time increased from £60,000,000 to £91,000,000. In the twelve years there was only one, 1855 (when the revenue was raised high above the average by special means), without a large deficit. In estimating the true position of French finance at the present time, it must be borne in mind that not only has the nation to bear, in payment of interest of the debt, an annual burden of £40,000,000, but also that it will take some time for the national income to regain its former amount, and that the war has caused a very great stagnation in trade and manufactures.

Will this stagnation be temporary or permanent? It is generally assumed as a matter of course that it will be only temporary; but the hugeness of the debt and the eagerness with which the loan was taken up would seem to indicate that the interest which it was necessary to offer in order to obtain the money was so high as to attract capital which might otherwise have been devoted to production. It must be remembered that at the end of the war and of the revolution in Paris a great amount of capital must have been lying idle. During the two sieges of Paris little or no production could have been carried on within the city; very little capital was being distributed as wages, and the ordinary industry of the city must have been quite at a standstill. For six months or more capitalists engaged in production in Paris had not been receiving any returns; and while their capital was thus lying idle, while Paris was still in a state of siege, and while the prospects of future tranquillity were, to say the least, extremely doubtful, this loan guaranteeing an interest of six per cent was offered. What more natural than that the Parisian capitalists having been so long without receiving any return on their capital, and not being able to see any immediate prospect of employing it in productive industry, should have eagerly taken up a loan which secured to them, without any risk and without any labour of superintendence, an interest of six per cent. If this is a correct explanation of the manner in which any considerable portion of the loan was taken up, it affords no evidence of returning financial prosperity; on the contrary, by absorbing

capital which would otherwise have been in a short time re-engaged in production, it indicates the perpetuation of the most serious national impoverishment. The following passage taken from Mr Mill's chapter on National Debts points out the exact danger of the present financial position of France. Assuming that there are circumstances when a loan is a convenient and even a necessary expedient, he continues:—"What we have to discuss is the propriety of contracting a national debt of a permanent character, defraying the expenses of a war, or of any season of difficulty, by loans, to be redeemed either very gradually, and at a very distant period, or not at all. This question has already been touched upon in the First Book. We remarked that if the capital taken in loans is abstracted from funds either engaged in production, or destined to be employed in it, their diversion from that purpose is equivalent to taking the amount from the wages of the labouring classes. Borrowing, in this case, is not a substitute for raising supplies within the year. A Government which borrows does actually take the amount within the year, and that too by a tax exclusively on the labouring classes: than which it could have done nothing worse, if it had supplied its wants by avowed taxation; and in that case the transaction and its evils would have ended with the emergency; while by the circuitous mode adopted, the value exacted from the labourers is gained, not by the State, but by the employers of labour, the State remaining charged with the debt besides, and with its interest in perpetuity. The system of public loans in such circumstances may be pro-

nounced the very worst which in the present state of civilization is still included in the list of financial expedients." The only excuse, he adds, which such a system admits of is hard necessity; the impossibility of raising an enormous annual sum by taxation, without resorting to taxes which from their odiousness, or from the facility of evasion, it would have been found impracticable to enforce. It is probable that this excuse of sheer necessity may with justice be urged in defence of those who are now at the head of the government in France; and it must also be remembered that only that part of the loan which was raised in France is open to the objection that it will tend to perpetuate the stagnation of industry in that country by absorbing the funds destined to be again productively employed. That part of the loan which was raised in London, for instance, will not have any depressing influence on the revival of French commerce; nor will it produce any ill effect on England's prosperity unless it can be shown, which is highly improbable, that money was in this country withdrawn from production in order to be invested in the loan. But notwithstanding all the extenuating circumstances that may be urged in defence of the loan, the fact remains that in so far as the money raised in France decreased the sum destined to be engaged in production, a corresponding influence is exerted to prevent the revival of industry in that country.

This tendency to withdraw capital from industrial employments is the first and most important of the dangers connected with the system of public loans. But there are also other dangers which must not be

passed over. It has been pointed out that when a loan withdraws capital from industry, the effect on the country is the same as if the whole amount had been raised by taxation, and that besides the nation is charged with the debt and with its interest in perpetuity. Notwithstanding this special disadvantage, the source of the consequent distress and stagnation of trade is not immediately apparent. On the contrary, the distress and stagnation are frequently attributed to circumstances which are beneficial to trade rather than otherwise. Just as in France to-day, there are many who insist that it is Free Trade which is impoverishing the country, and that therefore the commercial treaty with England must not be renewed. The shoe pinches, but, contrary to the old proverb, the person who owns it cannot tell where; and, in his distress, he cuts his shoe to pieces with easing the pain in his foot. But when additional supplies of money are raised by additional taxation, every one knows exactly how, and to what extent, he is injured and inconvenienced by the new imposts; consequently a strong pressure is brought to bear on the government to exercise increased economy, and to cut down all expenditure that is not absolutely necessary. Excessive taxation, therefore, in a country possessing free political institutions, brings with it its own remedy. But when a country is in the habit of resorting to loans, there is no guarantee that the money raised is spent economically, nor yet that there was any urgent necessity for the expenditure. In his work on National Debts, Mr D. Baxter says: "When money is raised by taxation within the year for which it is needed, the

amount that can be raised is limited by the tax-enduring habits of the people, and must be as small as possible in order not to provoke discontent. For the same reason it must be spent economically, and made to go as far as possible. But when money is raised by loans, it is limited only by the necessity of the *interest* not being too large for the taxable endurance of the people, or provoking their discontent. Hence the limits of borrowing are about twenty times larger than the limits of taxation, and an amount that is monstrous as a tax, is (apparently) a very light burden as a loan. In consequence, borrowing is freed from the most powerful check that restrains taxation.....When a loan is obtained the reason for economical expenditure is equally wanting, and borrowed money is commonly expended with much greater profuseness, and even wastefulness, than would be the case with taxes. Besides, loans are subject to considerable cost in commissions and other expenses, which diminish the net sum that reaches the treasury. They are also raised by the issue of stock at a discount, which can only be redeemed at a higher rate in times of prosperity. From all these causes it generally results that very much more money, frequently many times as much, is raised and spent by loans than would have been spent out of taxation only." Beside these economical disadvantages connected with the system of loans, there are also reasons from a moral point of view why an increase of indebtedness should be discouraged. National Debts have aptly been termed "mortgages of capital and industry." The absolute owner of property has a perfect right to raise money by mortgaging it;

but the State is not like an individual, the absolute owner of a permanent estate that can without injustice be mortgaged at pleasure. By raising a loan and thus mortgaging the capital and industry of a nation, the State—that is the individuals composing it—do not inflict a charge only on what belongs to themselves. Beside mortgaging their own capital and industry, they also mortgage the capital yet unaccumulated of their successors, and the industry of their children yet unborn. "Such a power as this transfers a burden from one set of workers and property to a materially different set of workers and property, and inflicts a great deal of hardship, and often of injustice, upon future generations*." For instance, the tax-payers of Great Britain have to-day to contribute an annual sum of more than £24,000,000 to pay the interest on debts incurred principally with the object of carrying on unjustifiable wars at the beginning of this century; and French subjects for generations and ages to come will be taxed for the cost of the series of wicked and wanton wars in which the second empire engaged the nation. A hundred years hence the French people will still be paying for the extravagance of the empire and for the Crimean, Italian, Chinese, Cochin China, Mexican, and German wars. By means of loans one generation is enabled to gratify its folly and ambition at the expense of all future generations.

It may be here remarked that this moral objection to loans does not apply to those that are raised in order to carry out works of public utility of which posterity will share the advantage, or defensive wars

* *National Debts*, by Dudley Baxter, M.A.

the issue of which involves the independence or the existence of the country. In all these cases future generations may be expected to derive an equal or even a greater advantage from the expenditure, with those who happened to be living when the outlay was incurred. It is therefore just and reasonable to throw a part of the cost on those who will reap a share of the advantage. A nation therefore would be morally justified in resorting to a loan to defray the cost of repelling an unprovoked invasion, whilst it would not be justified in mortgaging the capital and industry of its successors in order to carry on wars undertaken for the sake of dynastic considerations, military passion, or territorial aggrandisement. If France had observed this rule, she would not now be burdened with a debt of £1100,000,000. If England had observed it at the beginning of this century, we should not now be obliged to devote one-third of our annual revenue to the payment of the interest of our debt.

As France at the present moment leads the van of indebtedness, so during the reign of the ex-Emperor did she set the example of reckless expenditure in war and warlike equipments, which has proved so mischievous to the finances of nearly all the leading European nations. The continued series of deficits in a wealthy country like France, may be accounted for by her extravagant military expenditure; the example of France was followed by the neighbouring nations, so that in a few years all the leading continental countries were provided with bloated armaments, to support which they all, with the exception of Germany, had to incur annual additions to their burden of debt. The following

table shows the amount of the debt of the principal European countries, their average annual increase of debt, the numerical strength of their armies, and their military expenditure in 1865:—

	Average Annual Increase.	Amount of Debt in 1870.	Numerical Strength of Army in 1865, on Peace Establishment.	Cost of Army in 1865.
		£		£
England	Debt of England is decreasing	800,700,000	148,242	15,060,237
France	From 1853 to 1870 £18,500,000*	550,000,000*	404,192	17,384,961
Germany	Paying off fast.....	170,900,000	419,836	14,494,222
Russia...	From 1854 to 1869 £11,500,000	300,000,000	1,000,000	21,656,052
Austria	Since 1849 £9,000,000	310,000,000	269,100	10,336,762
Italy	From 1861 to 1869 £22,000,000	285,000,000	196,100	11,556,500
Spain	From 1861 to 1870 £9,000,000.....	237,000,000	84,290	3,310,174
Turkey	From 1850 to 1870 £5,000,000	104,000,000	148,680	6,000,000

* Exclusive of the war indemnity.

Mr Dudley Baxter, in his work on National Debts, shows that within the last twenty-one and a half years, the total indebtedness of the world has increased by £2,218,000,000, or at the rate of £103,000,000 per year. Within the last twenty-two years, France has increased her debt by £370,000,000; Austria, by £185,000,000; Russia, by £200,000,000; Italy, by £250,000,000; Spain, by £114,000,000; the new German Empire, by £120,000,000; and Turkey, by £100,000,000. "These amounts only include £65,000,000 borrowed for the Franco-Prussian war; and omit more than £100,000,000 borrowed by other nations during 1870, but not yet appearing in their

official accounts*" They also omit the amount to be paid by France as the war indemnity. It has been calculated by Mr Baxter that only 12 per cent., or one-eighth of the total of the national debts of the world, has been raised for productive purposes, and that the remainder, 88 per cent., has been spent in war, warlike preparations, and other unproductive purposes.

Excluding for the present any consideration of the indebtedness of England and Germany, the foregoing table, and the figures which succeed it, show that all the countries referred to are, in time of peace as well as in time of war, steadily spending more than their income; that this extravagance is in a great measure due to the example set by France in her military expenditure, and that in fact these nations are ruining themselves in order to be ready at any moment to fly at each other's throats. We often hear the present century spoken of as one of great enlightenment and civilization. If the extensive armaments of continental countries are necessary, in order to secure them from the rapacious designs of their neighbours, no boast should be made of the progress of civilization; if, on the contrary, these armaments are unnecessary, and the military expenditure is just so much money thrown away, then surely no boast should be made of enlightenment.

In a former page the condition of these heavily indebted nations was referred to as if they were already on the high road to bankruptcy. We did not mean by this expression to imply that France, Prussia, and Austria, &c. would go through an international bank-

* *National Debts*, by Dudley Baxter, M.A.

ruptcy court, and pay so many shillings in the pound. Nations, unlike individuals, are never called upon to pay up the whole capital of their debts; and as long as they can go on paying interest to their creditors, they are nominally solvent. But in the industrial competition among nations those countries will, *cæteris paribus*, be most successful who are least heavily weighted by taxation. It is therefore probable that those nations who are so recklessly heaping up the burden of their debts may, in so doing, be sowing the seeds of their own industrial ruin. The rate at which they raise money will have to be increased if they go on borrowing in this extravagant manner, and the taxation necessary to pay the interest will be a heavy burden on industry, and will tend to diminish the profits of capital, and the wages of labour. At the same time, the rate of interest having risen in consequence of the loan-operations of the Government, it will become relatively more advantageous to the capitalist to invest in the loan than to employ his capital in carrying on production, and hence a double tendency will be working to diminish commercial prosperity. There is also a special danger connected with the policy of taxation on native industries, the nature of which may be illustrated by the following example. At the present time, in France, a manufacturer may be employing his capital in a glove manufactory. Previous to the war, he could obtain in this industry a return on his capital of 10 per cent., whereas in Government securities he would only have realized 4 per cent. After the war, the Government rate of interest is raised to 6 per cent., and a tax is placed on gloves in order

to raise the extra revenue required to pay the interest on the new loans, and to defray the other expenses of the war. Hence the profits of productive industry are diminished to, say, 7 per cent. In this case the only reward which the capitalist will receive for his risk and for his labour of superintendence will be 1 per cent.; for he could obtain 6 per cent. by buying Government stock without incurring any risk, and without having to undertake any labour. This reward he would probably regard as insufficient, and he would either withdraw his capital from industry, and invest it in Government stock, or he would remove himself and his capital to another country, such as Belgium, where the manufacture of gloves was not subjected to onerous taxation. If he did either of these things, the productive industry of France would suffer by the withdrawal of the whole amount of the glove-merchant's capital. The obvious reply to such an argument is, that a tax on gloves would not diminish the profits of capital, but would merely increase the price of gloves; so that the incidence of the tax would be on the consumer, not on the capitalist. Quite true; but if a tax is placed on French gloves, and their price is in consequence raised, it will be necessary simultaneously to place an import duty on all foreign gloves as well, or the consumer would avoid the tax by using Belgian or Spanish gloves rather than those made in France. Thus taxes on home products necessarily imply the imposition of duties on imports. It is almost unnecessary to point out that there is but one step between this policy and one of protection. As soon as the excise and import duties are imposed, and the natural

consequence ensues, that owing to an increase in the price of commodities the demand for them diminishes, it will be thought that the slackness of the home trade is caused by foreign competition; and what then will be so easy as a return to the protective system by increasing the import duties while the taxes on home products remain unchanged? It can hardly be doubted that this course will be adopted by France, if she is merely waiting for the expiration of the commercial treaties in order to impose import duties on foreign goods; and this just at a time when it is beginning to be universally recognized that there is nothing so paralysing to the industry of a country as Protection; when even in America the question "Does Protection protect?" is receiving on all sides a negative answer.

The Paris correspondent of the *Times*, writing on the French Budget in July last, says :—

"It deeply interests Europe to know whether France is going to resume the system of protection which she abandoned in 1860, but it is still more interesting to learn how she is to pay her debts. The Chamber will not have duties on raw material; M. Thiers will not have income-tax. Two important elements of revenue are thus rejected, but the necessary money must be raised somewhere, and the Chamber has to select the source. The solution which is most talked about is an Excise-tax on clothes and furniture, or more correctly on the stuffs employed in the manufacture of those two classes of objects. . . .

"But France cannot impose duties on her home products until she can simultaneously lay equal taxes

on similar articles imported from other countries; if she did, her own manufactures would be swept away from their own market. But as she cannot tax foreign goods until the Commercial Treaties now in force have been modified, the consequence is that, however skilfully the new plan may be devised, it will be impossible to apply it, or to raise a shilling by it, until new Treaties have been made. Meanwhile, the revenue will fall short in proportion to the taxes not realized, and the deficit will grow in the same degree."

It has been already pointed out how highly improbable it is that France, if she has recourse to import duties, will refrain from re-entering upon a protective policy. In fact, it is openly avowed that the discussions on the Budget really turn on the old controversy between Free Trade and Protection; and it may be assumed that from the day in which the new taxes on home products are adopted, France will return to the policy of Protection, which she was for a short time induced partially to abandon.

In another column in the number of the *Times* just quoted, the American correspondent gives an abstract of a paper lately published by the Hon. David A. Wells, formerly United States Commissioner of Revenue, in which he demonstrates the disastrous effect of protection in America, and shows that it injures not only the consumers of the protected commodities, but also the manufacturers and labourers engaged in the protected industries.

If therefore, as appears likely, the same scale of expenditure is continued in France, it is more than probable that she will return to Protection. This has

been the policy pursued in America*, and even the boundless resources of the United States have not been sufficient to prevent or counteract its damaging effects upon industry, and upon the general well-being of the community. How much more disastrous, then, will this policy be in an old country like France, with few undeveloped resources, with no boundless extent of cultivable land, and with a people much less energetic and enterprising than the inhabitants of the United States?

The material prospects of France, in whatever light they are regarded, are of the most gloomy nature. She has saddled herself with an enormous burden of debt, which has probably withdrawn capital from productive employment, and to pay the interest on which vexatious and injurious taxation is necessitated. The one chance of recovering her position would be by a penurious economy, and by a reduction of the military expenditure to its very smallest dimensions. These are remedies which France will be the last country in the world to adopt. Even now, the most popular man in France would probably be he who would involve her in another war, where she would have a chance—however remote—of regaining her military prestige. Under existing circumstances, the debt of France must continue to increase, and the burden on her industry become each

* During the American Civil War the necessities of the Treasury led to the introduction of a system of internal and direct taxation, which for its universality and peculiarities had probably no parallel in history. This system of taxation was of course accompanied by a corresponding increase of the tariff. After the termination of the war, there was a great reduction of taxation; but the reduction was mainly confined to the internal revenue system, leaving the taxes which had been imposed under the tariff almost entirely unchanged. (Vide Chapter in *Politico-Economical History*, by David A. Wells. Cobden Club Essays, 1872.)

year heavier. What will be the effect of this on her position as an industrial country? It has been well pointed out that, in time of peace, the industrial competition of nations gives a great advantage in the markets of the world to the country least weighted by debt. If this is true, what will in the future be the industrial position of France and those other European nations which are each year adding millions to the burden of their debt? The debt of Italy for the last nine years has been increasing at the annual rate of £22,000,000; Austria is a country of uninterrupted deficits; Russia is the same; and the financial condition of Spain and Turkey is so notorious as to need no comment. In the industrial competition of nations the indebtedness of these countries may in future be just sufficient to turn the scale against them; and England, Germany, and America would then be left as the great industrial nations of the world.

It may perhaps be thought that if a heavy debt is sufficient to prevent industrial success, England would have succumbed long ago under the burden of what, until last year, was the largest debt of any nation in the world. But it must be remembered that though the capital of our debt overtopped that of any other country, yet during the last fifty-five years, the proportion per head of the population of debt-charge to income has been rapidly and steadily diminishing; while in other countries, notwithstanding the fact that their estimated incomes per head have in some instances increased more rapidly than the estimated income per head in England, the proportion per head of debt-charge to income has been scarcely at all reduced, and

in some countries has been even augmented. The following tables, taken from Mr Baxter's work on National Debts, illustrate the different relative position of England to other continental countries in 1815—20 and in 1870:—

Nation.	Estimated income per head.	Annual debt-charge per head.	Percentage of debt-charge to income.	
	£ s.	s. d.		
United Kingdom	19 0	34 8	9·	1815-20
France	6 10	4 7	3·5	
Austria	6 10	2 4	1·8	
Prussia and German States	6 10	1 8	1·3	
United Kingdom	28 0	15 9	2·8	1868-70
France	21 0	9 9	2·3	
Austria	16 15	7 3	2·2	
German Empire	19 0	3 9	1·0	

From these tables it appears that while the estimated income per head in England has increased from £19 to £28, the annual charge per head has been reduced by considerably more than one-half, and the percentage of charge to income by more than two-thirds. On the other hand, the estimated income per head in France has more than trebled; the debt-charge per head has more than doubled; and the percentage of debt-charge to income has decreased by barely one-third. A comparison of other figures in the tables, showing the condition of Austria, reveals even more startling results, and shows why it is that England, although encumbered by an enormous debt, is in a financial and industrial position very superior to that of those continental countries whose percentage of

debt-charge to income is similar to her own. England is at present the greatest industrial nation in the world; America is fast treading on her heels, and she may in future anticipate a powerful rivalry from Germany. It will be interesting to examine what special points of advantage each of these three nations possesses in the great industrial competition of the future; and also what special disadvantages each country labours under.

Dealing in the first place with the indebtedness of each country, we find that Germany will, in a few years, be practically free from debt. Although, as previously shown, the nominal capital of her debt is £170,900,000, yet of this £68,315,000 has been spent on railways and other remunerative public works, so that the total unremunerative debt is £102,600,000. Considering the debt as a whole, the annual interest is £7,340,000, and the charge per head 3*s.* 9*d.* "But to pay this," says Mr Baxter, "the German States have the net receipts of their railways, and the produce of the public mines and iron-works, which in Prussia and Saxony and other States (without the domains and forests) balance the interests of the debts. The French payments will cancel a large portion of the debts, or be accumulated in funds or investments. The Germans alone of the great Powers will be practically free from debt, and not only so, but they will also possess great surplus funds and State property for the relief of taxation, and for use in war." This immense advantage of freedom from indebtedness is not shared either by England or by America.

We have already referred to the condition of the debt of England, but the indebtedness of the United

States remains to be described. On July 1st, 1861, the debt of the United States was £18,000,000. On July 1st, 1865, after four years of civil war, the debt had risen to £551,000,000. On January 1st, 1871, after five years and a half of peace, it was reduced to £466,400,000. Hence, in the four years of war, the debt was increased by the average annual rate of £133,000,000, while in the five years and a half of peace the average annual reduction has been more than £15,000,000. It is therefore evident that in relation to their indebtedness America and Germany are in a much better position than England; we can never hope to rival the rapidity with which the United States debt has since the war been paid off; and it is still more unlikely that we shall ever approach the freedom from indebtedness that will, in no very distant period, be enjoyed by the German Empire. But in other matters besides that of national indebtedness, the financial and industrial prospects of England compare unfavourably with those of America and Germany. At each end of the social scale in England there are vast numbers of unemployed and consequently unproductive persons. It is not intended to be implied that the production of wealth either directly or indirectly is the only worthy object of existence. It is not necessary to enter into any disputed questions of morality; it is simply intended to enumerate the circumstances which have a bearing upon the industrial position of a country; and among these circumstances must be included the proportion which the productive classes of the population bear to the unproductive classes. In no country are there such great extremes of wealth and poverty as

there are in England. Profuse luxury in one class and abject pauperism in another have long been marked characteristics of English society. The luxurious unemployed and the pauperized unemployed are more numerous, in proportion to the population, in England than perhaps in any other country. Beside these two classes of non-productive persons, there is another extremely numerous class in this country which is certainly less productive than the corresponding class in America and Germany. We refer to women. Except in the working class and in the lower middle class, the women of England are almost entirely non-productive. Nearly all trades and professions are closed against them. If they happen to be wealthy they seldom employ their wealth productively. When it is remembered that a married woman could, up to a year ago, be legally robbed by her husband even of her earnings, it is not necessary to point out any other circumstance to account for the fact that women as a class are not either productive capitalists or labourers. In America the marriage law offers no discouragement to women engaging in industry either in the capacity of capitalists or labourers. And women accordingly engage in trades and professions in far greater numbers than in this country. In Germany a great deal of agricultural and other labour is performed by women of the poorest class, whilst women of the middle and even upper classes do nearly all the household and domestic work, a great proportion of which is strictly productive. The conclusion is therefore inevitable that the wealth of England supports a larger proportion of non-producers, consisting principally of rich idlers,

paupers, and women, than either America or Germany, and that therefore, compared with those countries, England in this respect also stands at a disadvantage.

There is another matter of great industrial importance in which again it must be confessed that England compares unfavourably with Germany and the United States; and this is education. England may be said to be now fairly awake to her shortcomings in this respect, and she has at last begun in earnest to set about educating her labourers; but there are most formidable difficulties in her way, arising from the extreme poverty and pauperism of large masses of her people, which render it certain that it will be many years before her population will attain to the educational standard of Germany and America.

Again, if we look at the undeveloped resources of the three countries, both England and Germany are far outdistanced by America. But if, it may be asked, England is behindhand in so many respects, to what causes may be attributed the industrial predominance she has hitherto possessed? Her supremacy may be in part no doubt accounted for by the disadvantages under which other countries have laboured. The resources of America are only now in process of development; up to the time of the civil war a large proportion of her soil was tilled by slave labour, with all its economic disadvantages; the political struggle produced by the Slavery question culminated in a civil war costing the American nation unprecedented sacrifices both of blood and treasure; added to these disadvantages, the industry of America is still suffering from the policy of Protection, which has nearly crippled and

threatens completely to destroy some of her most valuable trades and manufactures. The political corruption of the United States, again, cannot fail to have a bad influence on commerce as well as on every other national interest; and it has probably had its share in producing the tendency to wild and unscrupulous speculation which has of late years specially characterised monetary proceedings in America.

Political considerations are almost sufficient to account for the fact, that Germany has not been, up to the present time, a formidable rival of England. The consolidation of the German empire is one of the most recent of important political events; previous to its accomplishment, the fiscal, financial, and commercial systems of nearly all the small independent German kingdoms were as bad as they could be. The greater part of Germany was impoverished and devastated in the beginning of the century by the Napoleonic wars; and the recent wars in which Germany has engaged, though costing her, in consequence of her triumphs, a smaller amount of money than might have been expected, must yet have inflicted upon her the severest losses in the stagnation of trade, and in the prolonged absence and death of large numbers of her industrial population. As it has been in the past, so probably will it be in the future, that the industrial prospects of Germany have more to fear from political than from any other causes. The political future of America and of England will probably be similar to their political past. Changes there will necessarily be, but they will be gradual and not spasmodic; they will be the progress of a free people towards further developments of

the already accepted doctrines of equality and the Divine right of each individual to liberty; but who dares imagine that this will be the political future of Germany—a country where political liberty is almost unknown, where the least sign of dissatisfaction with the despotism of the Emperor and Prince Bismarck is put down with a high hand, where democrats are thrust into prison merely for declaring their opinions, and where workmen on strike are shot down like dogs? There are plenty of signs that the German nation is beginning to be discontented with the continuance of the paternal tyranny it has so long endured; but the paternal tyranny is very powerful, and will die hard before it yields to the assaults of democracy. It is an important sign of the times, that the International Society contains about six times as many members in Germany out of a population of 40,000,000, as in England and America, with a joint population of 64,000,000. With despotism so strong on the one hand, and the spirit of revolt so active on the other, it cannot be expected that the political future of Germany will be unbroken by storms.

England, then, it would seem, owes her industrial supremacy partly to removable and removing causes which have operated to depress the industry of other nations; but partly also to the character of her people, to her financial and commercial policy, to her comparative freedom during the last half-century from war and political disturbances, and lastly, to her colonial possessions, which form at once a partial outlet for her surplus labour and advantageous fields for the investment of capital. These comprise the chief of the

advantages which England possesses in the industrial competition of nations. Her principal disadvantages consist of the magnitude of her national debt; the uneducated condition of her labourers; the rapid growth of pauperism, and the numerical strength of the unemployed part of her population. Can any of these sources of danger be removed? We have already referred to the very marked reduction of the percentage of debt-charge to income in this country during the last fifty years, and also to the legislative efforts lately made to provide for the education of the people. The more perplexing problems of pauperism and idle luxury still remain, presenting no hopeful features, becoming each year more difficult of solution, and showing no tendency at all to solve themselves. With regard to the growth of luxury and of the numbers of unproductive persons, it may be urged that the total productiveness of the nation is as great as it is desirable it should be, and that a certain amount of leisure is as essential to the highest well-being of a nation as industry. This must be most readily admitted; we have never urged that there is too much leisure in England, but that this leisure is too unequally distributed. One class, for instance, passes through life surfeited with leisure; the principal occupation of the members of this class consists of seeking means of killing time; whilst members of another class are reduced into mere human machines, rising early and late taking rest, in one unceasing round of work. We read in one column of a newspaper of railway servants, pointsmen, and engine-drivers being kept at work nineteen, twenty-four, and even thirty hours at a stretch; while we find another

column filled with expressions of pity and sympathy for those sadly overworked public servants who pass the London season in going from laying a foundation stone to a flower show, from the flower show to pigeon shooting, from pigeon shooting to a banquet, from the banquet to a ball; and then, in order to complete the ghastly contrasts, one may find in another page an account of the life of the children employed in brick-fields. There are some instances in which babies of three years and a half old have been found at work in brick-fields; the usual age is from nine to ten. At this age children are employed to carry loads of clay almost as heavy as their own bodies; they are kept at this severe toil from fourteen to sixteen hours a day; and in going backwards and forwards with their load they frequently walk an average distance of fifteen miles daily. If the superabundant leisure which is nearly killing one class with *ennui* could be a little more equally distributed, might it not be hoped that these wretched brick-field children would come in for some share of it? The juxtaposition of repletion and starvation would then be less revoltingly frequent.

It is impossible in this place to do more than merely allude to the growth of pauperism—the remaining subject of the list which we enumerated as sources of danger to the industrial greatness of England. At the present moment there is in London a decided diminution in the number of paupers as compared with the returns of two or three previous years. It is, however, doubtful how far this improvement is produced by permanent causes; it may indeed be feared that the tide is steadily rising, and that the decrease of pauperism we are now

witnessing is merely the recoil of the great wave of destitution that spread over London in 1866-7. We are far from imagining that pauperism or any other really great social difficulty can be removed by an Act of Parliament; but, though legislation cannot cure an evil, it may be that past legislation has increased and aggravated it, and in this case much good work in the way of repeal can be done by Acts of Parliament. If it be true that "The State can have just as many paupers as it chooses to pay for, and that the number of paupers is really decided by Act of Parliament as much as the number of soldiers and sailors"—then the nation should demand through its representatives that legislation should do its utmost to remove the evil that legislation has produced.

Considering the recent alarming increase of pauperism and the manner in which it threatens our national prosperity, and considering further how large a proportion of our pauperism can be traced directly to the operation of the Poor Law, there is no subject at once so important and so practicable that can engage the attention of statesmen; but there seems unfortunately at the same time no subject on which a more perverse determination is shown to evade any recognition of the true cause of the evil. If this determination is persevered in, and if Poor Law reformers pursue the course they have hitherto generally adopted, of encouraging over-population by endeavouring to prevent or counteract its effects, pauperism must go on increasing; it will become each year more dangerous to the welfare of the State, and less amenable to the control of legislation. Of all the sources of danger to Eng-

land's commercial prosperity, it is probably the most serious. Our national debt is decreasing; much can be done to diffuse education among the bulk of our people; the most serious disadvantages of the distribution of wealth and of leisure are moral and social rather than economic; but the spread of pauperism is equally dangerous, whether it is considered from the industrial, social, or moral point of view: it is in reality the parent of the chief difficulties in respect to the education and the overwork of children and some other classes of labourers: there is hardly an important social difficulty that cannot be traced to its agency. No speculations as to the industrial prospects of England are worth the paper they are written upon, if they do not take into account the probable future of pauperism. We therefore say in conclusion that if, in the future industrial competition of nations, England is to keep either first or second in the field, she must devise some means not only of checking the growth of pauperism, but of eradicating the disease from her social system. And those who deal with this question of pauperism should remember that it is not to be remedied by cheap food, by reductions of taxation, or by economical administration in the departments, or by new forms of government. Nothing will permanently affect pauperism while the present reckless increase of population continues. And nothing will be so likely to check this increase as the imposition by the State on parents of the whole responsibility of maintaining their offspring. There is no doubt that the greatest authority on this subject was right when he said, "that if the government and constitution of this country were in all other

respects (than this) as perfect as the wildest visionary thinks he could make them; if parliaments were annual, suffrage universal, wars, taxes, and pensions unknown, and the civil list fifteen hundred a year, the great body of the community would still be a collection of paupers."

M. G. F.

VII.

WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS?*

At the meeting of the British Association at Norwich in 1868, Canon Girdlestone read a paper on the agricultural labourer. The paper created great interest and aroused unusual excitement. Vigorous statements were met by vehement counter-statements. It would be presumptuous for any one who is not as intimately acquainted with North Devonshire as Canon Girdlestone to express a positive opinion, with regard to the absolute accuracy of all his statistics. Perhaps he would have met with less opposition if his language had been less vigorous, and had indicated less indignation; but a man must have, if not a hard heart, at any rate very dull sensibility, if he can speak with complete calmness when describing the condition of labourers struggling for existence upon 9*s.* or 10*s.* a week. But even if it can be proved that Canon Girdlestone had slightly understated the earnings of the Devonshire peasant, few can have the hardihood to

* *Macmillan's Magazine*, October, 1868.

deny that the condition of our rural labourers is most unsatisfactory, and in many aspects most distressing. It is sometimes almost triumphantly said—I have heard it in the House of Commons—that the agricultural labourer is not so badly off as many who work in our large towns. It will not weaken a single remark I am about to make if it is at once conceded that a labourer in London earning 18*s.* a week is not more prosperous than the labourer in the country with only 10*s.* House-rent is far dearer in London than in the country; food is more expensive; and the frequent distress in the East of London has demonstrated the melancholy fact that the mode in which some of our most important branches of industry are carried on, is such that a financial crisis may suddenly paralyse trade and throw thousands out of employment. The labour on the farm, though poorly remunerated, is constant and certain. But all these admissions do not prove that the rural labourer enjoys one iota more wealth or comfort; they only show that the distribution of the vast wealth of England, in the towns as well as in the country, does not confer an adequate amount of happiness, but, on the contrary, often inflicts wretchedness upon those whose labour primarily produces this wealth.

The facts I am about to mention are the result of my own personal observation. Many years of my life were passed on a large farm. Between many of the labourers and myself there has been such intimate friendship that I have been able to obtain a close insight into their daily life, and thus to become acquainted with their most pressing wants. During the winter of 1867-8, when bread was at 1*s.* 5*d.* the 8-lb. loaf, the

agricultural wages paid in South Wiltshire were 10*s.* a week. I am aware that more was occasionally earned by doing piecework, such as threshing, hoeing, hedging, &c.; but last Christmas I ascertained from a labourer, whom I knew sufficiently well to place implicit reliance on his statements, that he, his wife, and four young children were obliged for many weeks to live upon dry bread and tea; the only addition to this miserable diet was half-a-pound of butter, bought once a week as a Sunday luxury. This man was sober, industrious, and an excellent workman, and had been employed upon the same farm for many years. But, independently of such cases as the one just described, it is a fact that the vast majority of agricultural labourers never can, or at least never do, make any provision for old age. There are large districts of the best cultivated land in the country where it would be almost impossible to find a labourer who had saved £5. As a class, they look forward to be maintained upon parish relief when they are unable to work.

It therefore appears that our agricultural economy is such that those who till our soil frequently spend their lives in poverty and end their days in pauperism. People who desire to provide a remedy for this state of things often say that farmers ought to pay higher wages, that landlords ought to build more comfortable cottages, and that more schools should be erected. With regard to the first of these suggestions, it is quite certain that if men are willing to work for 10*s.* a week, employers will not voluntarily offer them 14*s.* or 15*s.* Moreover, something beside higher wages is required to effect the permanent improvement we desire. About twenty

years since, in Cambridgeshire, fossil deposits were discovered rich in phosphates and composed of what are known as coprolites. Many thousands were employed as coprolite-diggers; the demand for labour in the district was consequently greatly increased, and many agricultural labourers received as coprolite-diggers 18*s.* a week. It is notorious that the brewers have obtained no inconsiderable portion of these additional wages. There is good reason to suppose that the coprolite-digger has not saved more, and has not spent a larger sum on his children's education, than the less highly paid farm-labourer.

Let it not be supposed that in my opinion additional wages are no boon; the example just quoted is only intended to show that when a class has long been sunk in poverty a sudden rise in wages will not suffice to cure the improvidence, the ignorance, and the many other evils which this poverty has been so instrumental in producing. Apart from any *à priori* reasoning it can be conclusively proved by statistics that higher wages bring with them an impoverishing influence, unless they tend to make the improvident more prudent. It has been demonstrated that the number of marriages varies with the price of bread. In other words, the additional wealth which cheap bread gives the labourer, immediately encourages more people to marry; the result is an increase of population; there will, consequently, soon be more labourers competing for employment; in this way, cheap food, instead of permanently raising the condition of the labourer, brings a force into operation, the ultimate effect of which will be to reduce wages. It cannot be too constantly borne

in mind that the improvident are reckless with regard to the future; and that, consequently, if they obtain additional wealth they will spend it and not save it. Those who are ignorant rarely appreciate the advantages of education, and those who have retained no benefit from attending school will scarcely think it worth their while to spend any extra wages in keeping their children at school a greater number of years. By those in whom the nobler of human instincts have never been developed, wealth will not be regarded as bringing with it the opportunity of enjoying rational and intellectual pleasures; it will be used, as we know it is used, not so much to improve the lot of those now living, as to bring into the world an augmented population to live the life of those who have gone before them. Leisure is a priceless blessing to those who possess some mental cultivation, but it hangs heavily on the hands of those who are as uneducated as our agricultural labourers. I remember one winter's evening calling on one of these labourers, about seven o'clock; I found him just going to bed. On being asked why he did not sit up an hour or two longer, he said in a tone of peculiar melancholy which I can never forget, "My time is no use to me, I can't read. I have nothing to do, and so it is no use burning fire and candle for nothing." When I reflected that this was a man endowed by nature with no ordinary intellectual power, I thought what a satire his words were upon our vaunted civilization.

With regard to the second of the proposed remedies, viz. the building of improved cottages, it is impossible to exaggerate the evils which result from the present miserable hovels. It would be well if a survey could be

made of the whole country, so that those landowners who do not maintain decent cottages on their estates might be known and publicly stigmatised. It would be still more desirable to have a record of those landed proprietors who, with a refinement of selfishness, have not allowed cottages to be built in order that they might escape poor-rates. It has lately been stated that one individual, it seems a bitter jest to call him a nobleman, owns a well-cultivated estate of many thousand acres, and upon it there is not a single cottage. The Commissioners who recently investigated the effects of agricultural gangs have shown that these gangs are required because there is scarcely a cottage on the land they cultivate. Any one who reads their report, or who turns to the debate on the subject, in 1867, will find that the gangs cultivate a wide tract of highly farmed land, and that the men, women, and very young children, who compose the gangs, are living in such a condition that some of the worst horrors of slavery seem to be in existence among us in the nineteenth century. Many of the remarks made in reference to a rise in wages apply to improving labourers' dwellings. Although it is manifestly impossible for any social advance to take place without such an improvement, yet it will be comparatively ineffectual unless it is accompanied by other elevating agencies. Men and women, who from early youth have herded together, cannot adequately appreciate the mischief inflicted on their children if they permit them to do the same. Many labourers, therefore, if they had three or four bedrooms, would immediately let one or two of them to lodgers, and things would be as bad as before. Of

course it may be said that men who would do such a thing act very wrongly, and show great ingratitude to improving landlords; but these men are made what they are by the life they and their parents have led in childhood, and in youth. It therefore becomes evident that the problem which is really presented for solution is this:—How can we raise the character of the labourer so as to enable him to utilize the advantages which he might derive from such circumstances as a rise in his wages and an improvement in his dwelling? The crucial test of the value of all agencies which are brought into operation to improve the condition of the labourer is this:—Do they exert a direct tendency to make the labourer rely upon self-help? If this question cannot be answered in the affirmative the benefits arising from these agencies cannot be permanent. Higher wages may stimulate an increase of population, and thus create an influence to reduce wages. More commodious dwellings may encourage the taking in of lodgers, and thus there will be no greater accommodation for the labourer and his family. Again, it has often been proved that the condition of a large class cannot be permanently raised by the efforts of individual philanthropists. Canon Girdlestone has conferred a great benefit upon his poor parishioners by organizing a migration of labourers from Halberton, where wages are very low, to other parts of the country where they are much higher. No one could have acted with more courage, wisdom, or success; it has been necessary for him to be very courageous, for he has had to face the irritating hostility of farmers and others who suppose that they are interested in keeping wages low. His efforts have been wisely con-

ceived and successfully conducted, for not only are the labourers whom he has sent away receiving higher wages, but the number of those in his own parish has been diminished, and consequently their wages have been augmented. No one can however foretell who will be Canon Girdlestone's successor, or how long it may be before in every parish there will be some one as good, as wise, and as successful in his philanthropy as the vicar of Halberton. Moreover the question arises:—How is it that these rural labourers require the intervention of others to induce them to migrate from a locality where wages are low, to one where they are comparatively high? A skilled and educated artisan would not continue year after year to work in the south of England, if he knew that in Lancashire or in Yorkshire he would receive a much greater remuneration. Those of our artisans who are educated, are active and enterprising, and they would no more think of continuing to work in a permanently depressed labour-market than would the merchant think of selling his goods in a market where prices were exceptionally low. What Canon Girdlestone is obliged to do for his labourers an artisan will do for himself. The reason of this is obvious. The agricultural labourer is generally too poor and too ignorant voluntarily to migrate, and ignorance produces a greater effect than poverty in keeping him stationary. Yorkshire appears to many a south-of-England peasant an unknown land, and he would consider removing to it a most formidable undertaking. Emigration to America or Australia is of course a still more perilous enterprise. Wages in the north continue year after year fifty or sixty per cent.

higher than wages in the south. It should be always borne in mind that the principles of political economy have to be modified according to the circumstances to which they are applied. For instance, it is often said that the price of labour is regulated, like the price of corn, by demand and supply. The price of corn constantly tends to be the same in different parts of the same country. There cannot be any greater difference between the price of wheat in Liverpool and in London than is equivalent to the cost of carrying the wheat from one town to the other. This tendency to equalize prices acts very effectually in the case of many kinds of labour; but when men are so immovable as many of our peasants, the country must for economical purposes be regarded as split up into so many distinct provinces, between which there is scarcely any exchange of labour, although there is a completely free interchange of commodities.

Yorkshire and Lancashire farmers now offer 15*s.* or 16*s.* a week to the Dorsetshire or Devonshire peasant, who is only receiving 10*s.* a week, and yet the offer is made almost in vain; its only effect is here and there to stimulate an individual philanthropist to do for others what they ought to do for themselves. An agricultural labourer is the emigrant who would be most heartily welcomed in the United States or in Australia. Countries which have a boundless extent of fertile land, as yet unoccupied, must be enriched by labourers who know how to till the soil. After calculating the cost of living in England and in Australia, I have no hesitation in saying that an agricultural labourer would by emigrating increase his earnings at least threefold.

If he remains in our own country, his days will probably be ended in the workhouse: if he emigrates, prudence and industry will enable him to save a comfortable competency; he may soon occupy a position which he can never attain in England, for he may save enough to become the owner of the land which he cultivates. Our peasants are the class who would derive the maximum advantage from emigration; when they know and act upon this fact, many of the problems relating to their condition will have solved themselves. Wages will rise with as much certainty as the price of wheat after a bad harvest, and landlords will be compelled to have a sufficient number of comfortable cottages upon their estates. The labourer will be even more master of the situation than either the farmer or the landlord now is, when he can say, "If you compel me to walk four or five miles to my work because you wish to avoid the poor-rates, if you wish to drive me to live in a cottage which is not half so well fitted up as your stable, I will not submit; I will either remove to some part of England where my labour is wanted, or I will emigrate to America or Australia." It will be asked:—Where are the farmers to find the money to pay higher wages? More than one answer can be given to this question. If a rise in wages should permanently reduce the profits of the farmer below the current rate, he must be compensated by a decrease in his rent; it is, however, almost certain that no loss will ultimately have to be borne either by the landowner or his tenant. It has often been affirmed that much of the labour which is nominally very cheap is in reality extremely costly. Thus trustworthy authorities have said that a

labourer with only 9*s.* or 10*s.* a week is too poorly fed to do a really good day's work*. Many have gone so far as to assert that if our worst paid agricultural labourers were converted into serfs or slaves, their masters would find that it was to their interest to feed and house them better than they are fed and housed at present. It has moreover been pointed out that the cost of labour depends not only upon the wages which are paid but also upon the efficiency of the labourer. If A does twice as much work as B, A's labour will really be cheaper than B's, although A's wages may exceed B's by seventy-five per cent. The cost of labour depends quite as much upon the efficiency of labour as upon the remuneration paid to it. I believe it will be shown in the course of this article that the agencies which will prove most effective in advancing wages will exert a powerful influence in increasing the efficiency of labour. If this should be so, more work will be done and more wealth produced; consequently there will be more to distribute, not only in wages to the labourer, but also in rent to the landlord and in profits to the farmer.

After these general remarks it must be obvious that the remedy upon which I chiefly rely is education. Education must cause an advance in wages, since if labourers were less ignorant they would be more enterprising, and would be willing to migrate to localities

* It will be shown in a postscript to this article that these and other remarks on the condition of the agricultural labourer are entirely corroborated by the evidence obtained by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of women and children employed in Agriculture. The report of this Commission was not issued until a considerable time after the publication of this article.

where labour was more highly remunerated. Education would also cause more comfortable cottages to be built; for if a man had some mental cultivation he would not submit to dwell in a hovel, and he would be outraged if all his children were obliged to sleep in one room.

Again, there would be more chance that a rise in wages, accompanied by intellectual development, would be permanent in its character. It is always hazardous to diminish profits below the average rate in order to advance wages. Such an advance cannot be permanent; it may ultimately prove extremely mischievous to those whom it is especially intended to benefit. For when an industry becomes exceptionally depressed, there is at once an inducement offered to withdraw capital from it; capital is the fund from which wages are paid, hence an advance in wages which is attracted from profits, carries with it the seeds of its own destruction. But if the agricultural labourers become better educated, while at the same time their wages advance, their labour will be rendered more efficient, and will be really cheaper, although a higher price is paid for it. It would be almost superfluous to make any remarks with the object of showing how much additional efficiency is conferred upon labour by education. All the most valuable industrial qualities are intimately connected with the development of the mind. The ignorant workman is generally unskilled; it is each year becoming more necessary to apply science to agriculture; a greater portion of the work on the farm is constantly being done by machinery, and many agricultural implements are now so costly and complicated that it would be hazardous to entrust them to those who are

comparatively ignorant. Some of the most profound conclusions of modern science are now being applied to the breeding of stock and to the cultivation of cereal crops. Many portions of Mr Darwin's work on the origin of species may be considered as an elaborate treatise on practical agriculture. The fact is consequently beginning to be recognised, that the farmer ought not only to be a highly educated man himself, but that to no employer of labour will the skill which education gives the workman be more essential. It may be further remarked, that man's moral qualities are as a general rule developed by the proper training of the mind. It is of peculiar importance in agriculture, that the workman should possess a high moral character. The profits of the farmer often entirely depend upon the honesty and the fidelity with which his labourers do their work. In many employments the labourer can be readily overlooked, and indolence or negligence at once detected: thus a hundred operatives are often assembled in one room in a cotton manufactory, and the foreman has no difficulty in keeping a watchful eye upon all of them. It also often happens that manufacturing machinery is so arranged that those who are in charge of it, if they neglect their work, at once become, as it were, self-detected. But on the farm, much of the labour is so scattered that it is impossible adequately to superintend it. The most active watchfulness will not prevent those who are lazy from shirking their work, and it is impossible to extort zeal and activity from those who are indolent and apathetic.

It was shewn by Olmsted, and also by Professor Cairns in his book on the Slave Power, that in the

United States corn could never be properly cultivated by slave-labour, because the labour required is too widely scattered to be adequately watched. Slaves were consequently used to grow sugar, cotton, and tobacco, because in the cultivation of these products a great amount of labour is concentrated upon a very small area. It would be a startling revelation if an accurate estimate could be obtained of the loss which is inflicted on employers, and especially on farmers, by workmen so frequently exhibiting a want of intelligent interest and of active energy. It has been often said, that this interest and energy can never be expected to exist in men who simply toil for hire, and who do not directly participate in the prosperity of their industry. It is a matter of surprise, not that so much of our labour is comparatively inefficient, but that men work half as well as they do, when their life is uncheered by hope, and when they witness vast fortunes realized from the fruits of their toil, without any perceptible improvement being effected in their own condition. How many iron-masters and manufacturers have retired from business millionaires, whilst little or no extra prosperity has been enjoyed by those through whose labour this wealth has been produced. The want of a common interest between employers and employed has been long recognised as a most grave defect in our industrial system, and various schemes of co-partnership and co-operation have from time to time been proposed, with the view of remedying the defect. A Suffolk landlord, the late Mr Gurdon of Assington, let two farms to his labourers, who formed themselves into an association. He advanced them the necessary

capital, and the most remarkable success has been achieved. The capital has been repaid, the farms are admirably cultivated, and the most extraordinary improvement has been effected, not only in the material, but also in the moral condition of these labourers. I am also very confident that some plan of modified partnership, such as that which has been so successfully introduced into the manufactory of the Messrs. Crossley, at Halifax, and the colliery of the Messrs. Briggs, at Methley, would, if applied to farming, yield equally satisfactory results. It might be arranged that the labourer in addition to his ordinary wages should receive a certain share of any profits yielded after a fair return had been secured upon the employer's capital. If a farmer should find that his average profits had been 10 per cent., he might agree to divide a certain share—say a third—of his profits beyond 10 per cent. among his labourers. The bonus thus distributed among the labourers would not represent so much abstracted from profits, but rather the amount of extra profit obtained by the employer, in consequence of the additional stimulus given to the industry of the labourers. It is, however, obvious that our peasantry must be better educated before it is likely that these principles of co-operation and co-partnership will be generally adopted in agriculture. Experience has shown that only the most intelligent of our artisans possess the requisite qualifications to form themselves into associations for industrial purposes. The members of a co-operative society must have the sagacity to select the ablest amongst them to be managers; and when managers have been appointed they must be

obeyed. A class who have been reckless because they have been ignorant, and who have been improvident because their poverty has made them hopeless with regard to the future, will rarely possess the prudence which is essential to give stability to a commercial concern. A farmer would also feel much more confidence in giving his labourers a certain share of his profits if they were less ignorant than they are at the present time. This participation in profits implies a certain kind of partnership. It would be necessary for the labourers implicitly to trust their employer's estimates of his profits; or, if they appointed one or two of their number to examine his books, it would be essential that the men so appointed should not betray the confidence thus placed in them, and should not annoy and hamper their employer with undue meddling or with irritating suspicion. Ignorance is a fruitful source of suspicion, and it may be feared that many of our rural peasantry are not yet sufficiently advanced for the general adoption of these economic arrangements. But I should deeply regret in the slightest degree discouraging any one from making such an experiment. I am confident many farmers who complain of the loss they suffer from the listlessness of their labourers would be able to conduct their business not only more easily, but far more profitably, if they stimulated the activity of their labourers by giving them a bonus, as already suggested. My object is to show that improved education would fit the labourers for a new and better economic system.

Throughout these remarks I have striven to keep steadily in view the great truth that no permanent help

can be rendered to any body of men unless, as a consequence of this help, they learn to place increased reliance on themselves. Many proposals which are supported by the benevolent would ultimately tend to degrade the labourer by making him more dependent. Canon Girdlestone warmly advocates a more liberal administration of the Poor Law. If his advice in this respect were adopted incalculable mischief might be inflicted on those whom he seeks to benefit. As shown in previous essays, our present Poor Law system, rigorous though some consider it, has done much to foster that recklessness and improvidence which prove the bane of so many of our labourers.

Few persons who have studied the past history of the Poor Law can resist the conclusion that if parochial relief were administered with greater laxity and liberality, the condition not only of rural labourers, but also of the poor generally, would be rapidly rendered much more unsatisfactory. It can scarcely be doubted that the almost entire absence of saving among our agricultural population is in no small degree due to the discouragement given to thrift by our Poor Law system. It has already been stated that many of the best cultivated districts in this country will have to be travelled through for many miles before a single rural labourer can be found who has saved sufficient to make the smallest provision for old age or sickness. The grave import of such a fact will be more fully appreciated when it is compared with some circumstances which recently (1868) took place in France in connection with the raising of a French loan. In a short time £26,0000,000 was sent in cash to the Govern-

ment merely as a deposit upon the loan. It is well known that no inconsiderable portion of this sum was subscribed by the peasantry. These people were not prompted by a feeling of enthusiastic loyalty to support the Government by their savings, for at the very time when the subscriptions were being received, one of the most purely agricultural departments in France rejected the Government candidate by a majority of two to one. Our own Government would of course have no difficulty in raising an equally large loan; but we should be taught a lesson of humility when we find that scarcely anything could be collected from our peasantry.

It may be argued that the French peasantry are small proprietors; whereas our peasantry are only labourers. Exactly so; but this only points out the gravest of all defects in the economic condition of a nation. A great part of the whole land of this country is owned by a comparatively small number of proprietors. I cannot on this occasion discuss the oft-debated question whether French agriculture is more productive of wealth than our own; but facts indisputably prove that in France there is a much happier distribution of wealth among the rural population than there is in our own country. The French can with truth say to us, "We have not such great territorial proprietors as you have; we have not so many large capitalist farmers; but the industry of those who till our soil is so generally stimulated by the magical feeling of ownership, and the desire to save exists so strongly, that our peasants can subscribe millions to a Government loan; whereas the poverty of your rural labourers is heightened by contrast with the wealth

of a great proprietor. Their life is a monotonous one, it is uncheered by hope; they never save, and the paupers' lot is the end of their industrial career."

It is not my intention to advocate the introduction of the French system of land tenure. Individual liberty is probably too much interfered with when the law decrees that a proprietor must divide his land equally among his children; but the day cannot be far distant when the English people will regard the tenure of land as one of the most important of questions. It is impossible adequately to discuss the subject here, and I shall therefore do nothing more than indicate two changes in our law which, if carried out, would, I believe, do much to improve the tenure of land in this country. In the first place, the present distinction in the devolution of real and personal property in the case of intestacy should be abolished. It is obvious that as long as such a distinction between land and other forms of property is maintained, an authoritative sanction and a powerful encouragement are given to primogeniture. In the second place, land should no longer be permitted to be settled or entailed on an unborn child. In this way land is what is popularly called tied up for a couple of generations; and as a consequence the quantity of land which can be brought into the market is artificially limited to a most serious extent.

Among the many reasons which may be advanced in support of these changes, it can be shown that the separation of the ownership of the soil from its cultivation is antagonistic to good farming. It often happens that improvements are not carried out upon English estates because farmers hesitate to invest capital upon

other men's property; and landowners do not like to take money from their younger children, who are comparatively poor, in order to make a rich elder son ultimately much richer. Any one who compares the condition of our rural labourers with that of the peasant proprietors of Flanders must be convinced that a most marked and beneficial influence is exerted on the life of those who till the soil, if they can feel that industry and thrift will give them a reasonable chance of becoming small landed proprietors. It is quite possible that a reform of our land laws would not, as an isolated measure, produce any very decided immediate effects. The agricultural labourer may not be at the present time qualified to become a peasant proprietor, even if a change in the law should facilitate the acquisition of land. It will be necessary to educate him better in order to fit him for this social advance. When many agencies have combined to depress the condition of a class, it is necessary not to rely upon a single ameliorating influence, but many forces of an elevating nature must be brought simultaneously into operation. Thus the cultivation of land by associations of labourers would represent a great social and economical progress. In order that these associations should be generally and successfully established it will be requisite to improve the education of the labourer; it will also be necessary to alter those laws which tend to make the sale of land complicated and expensive, and which artificially limit the quantity brought into the market.

Throughout this article the remedy which has been chiefly advocated is increased education; but such

advocacy can be of little practical use unless it can be shown how more satisfactory education is to be procured. A close examination into the present state of the agricultural population has led me to the following conclusions. First: there is no general deficiency of schools in the rural districts; many of our village schools are excellent, and almost all of them are sufficiently good to teach children the rudiments of education. Secondly: the ignorance of the agricultural labourers cannot therefore be caused by a want of schools, but must be attributed to the early age at which children are taken away from school. Not long since I examined a British school in a large agricultural village; the school was amply supported by subscriptions; the master was most efficient, and the scholars were forward. The school seemed to me as good as it could be. I knew, however, that the labouring population who lived in the neighbourhood were deplorably ignorant. On mentioning this circumstance to the master, he gave the exact explanation which I expected. He at once said, "The school is doing little good for the labourers' sons. A child when he is seven or eight years old can earn 1*s.* a week by halloaing at crows, and when a year older gets 2*s.* a week as a plough-boy. These children are almost invariably taken away from school at this early age, and they consequently soon forget the little they have ever learnt." He further remarked that the elder boys in the school, who were very forward, were not labourers' children, but were the sons of small farmers and tradesmen. In another neighbouring village there is not a single youth who can read sufficiently well to enjoy

a newspaper. This lamentably low state of education cannot be attributed to the want of a proper school, for almost all the girls in this village can read and write with facility, and they go to the same school as the boys. The superiority on the part of the girls is due to the circumstance that a boy can work when eight or nine years old, while there is seldom any demand for a girl's labour until she is a few years older. In the presence of these facts, the conclusion seems irresistible, that if we really desire to see our agricultural labourers educated, we must be prepared to support a measure which shall prohibit a child from being taken away from school before he has acquired the first rudiments of knowledge. Any measure which is not based upon this compulsory principle will prove almost useless, so far as the rural districts are concerned. The language of many electioneering addresses indicates a widely-spread opinion that the Bill introduced into Parliament in 1868 by Mr Austen Bruce and Mr W. E. Forster would secure to us a system of national education. The provisions of this bill would entirely fail to cope with the ignorance of the agricultural labourers. The measure provides that educational rates should be levied where schools are wanted; but if a model school were established in every English village, the children of the agricultural labourers would continue as uneducated as they are now, unless their parents were prohibited from taking them away from school directly they can earn the smallest weekly pittance.

The educational clauses of the Factory Acts might, with slight modifications, be easily applied to agricul-

ture. Recent legislation has extended the operation of these Acts to every important industry in the country, except agriculture. A child under thirteen cannot be employed in a factory, or a workshop, unless he attends school a certain number of hours a week; but he can be employed upon a farm if he has never been to school an hour in his life. The question will soon be indignantly asked: "Why should agriculture be thus exceptionally treated?" Not only is an incalculable injury done to our rural population, but all employers who are not farmers are unjustly treated. An agricultural implement maker, for instance, may say, "It is unfair that all sorts of restrictions should be imposed upon me, if I wish to employ a child. I cannot hope to attract an adequate amount of juvenile labour to my employment, if children can work on adjoining farms unhampered by restrictions." It is sometimes urged that the half-time system is not suited to agriculture, because a child's work is often far distant from the school; but no such objections would be valid, if young children were only permitted to work on alternate days. A well-known agriculturist, Mr Paget of Nottingham, has tried this system with eminent success. The pecuniary difficulty however generally suggests the most formidable objection. It is urged that it would be a great hardship to take away half the child's earnings from a father who only had 10*s.* a week; but it is erroneous to suppose that the child's earnings would be diminished by one half. If children under thirteen only worked on alternate days, the supply of labour would be diminished, and the immediate effect would be a rise in wages. It

must also be remembered that the wages of agricultural labourers are not strictly regulated by the demand and supply existing in the general labour market. A man—as I have shown—receives 10*s.* a week because he has not the power or the inclination to migrate to another locality. South-of-England farmers are really able to decree what wages they shall pay, as long as they see that their labourers, who are receiving only 10*s.* a week, will not be attracted to Lancashire or Yorkshire by the offer of 15*s.* Consequently, wages in such counties as Dorsetshire are not so much regulated by demand and supply, as by what the farmer thinks his labourers can just live upon. A striking corroboration of this melancholy fact is afforded by the circumstance that wages in the counties where the lowest wages prevail rise and fall with the price of wheat. When bread is very dear, farmers come to the conclusion that a labourer with a family cannot live upon the amount he is earning, and by a tacit, though general agreement, wages are raised. This is an exact description of the manner in which wages were in the winter of 1867-8 advanced from 9*s.* to 10*s.* in the south-west of England. When farmers make the calculation just described, they do not forget to take account of the children's earnings: if therefore these earnings were somewhat diminished by legislation, the minimum upon which the labourer is supposed to be able to live would have to be augmented, and he would not suffer.

Those, however, who fail to be convinced by these considerations, may console themselves with the general remark, that the labourer who, it is supposed, would

be particularly injured by restrictions upon the employment of children, can hardly be worse off than he is at present. When however so much stress is laid upon the pecuniary loss which might be temporarily inflicted by compulsory education, it should be remembered that we never look with alarm upon capital which is spent in effecting some improvement—such as drainage: for a season it may yield no return, but in due time where there was the useless and pestilential morass, there will be the joyous beauty of the plenteous harvest. Equally certain and still more striking will be the returns yielded to capital expended in giving education to those who have it not. Many a man whose life has been blighted by ignorance, many a one who has sunk into pauperism would, if his mind had been developed, have been active and prudent, would have secured a competency for himself, would have led a happy life, and have enriched his country by his industrial skill. Education is a priceless boon to all, but if it can be more valuable to one class than to another, that class is a rural peasantry. Men who live in large towns are brought into contact with their fellow men, and thus, without reading, obtain some knowledge and some mental activity; but those who till the soil often work apart from others, they have consequently little opportunity of acquiring new ideas through conversation, and as they are generally debarred from obtaining information from books, being unable to read, it is only too certain that their minds must stagnate. The life of few men would be more happy than that of the agricultural labourer, if sufficient were spared to him from the fruits of our fertile soil, to give

him a competency; and if he could turn to advantage his abundant leisure by acquiring knowledge which would enable him to appreciate the marvels and beauties of nature, by which he is constantly surrounded.

H. F.

POSTSCRIPT.

The Education Act and the Agricultural Commission.

January, 1872.

It will be observed that the above article was written in the autumn of 1868, nearly two years before the Elementary Education Act became law. It might be supposed that the passing of this measure renders it necessary to alter or modify many of the foregoing remarks in reference to the education of the agricultural labourer. Unfortunately, however, everything that was true three years since about the ignorance of rural labourers is not less true at the present time. Although it has been the fashion to call Mr Forster's Bill a measure of National Education, facts are every day coming to light which only too clearly show that the Act will scarcely do anything for education in the rural districts. As previously remarked, the ignorance existing among the agricultural labourers is almost entirely due to the early age at which children are taken away from school, and is only to a very small extent to be traced to deficiencies in school accommodation. The Act has been so framed that it is not likely to produce any appreciable influence upon the school attendance of the children of agricultural labourers. The Act provides that no bye-laws relating to compulsory attendance shall be passed in those localities where a school-board has not been established. It is also further provided that a school-board need not be constituted in any place where there is not found to be a deficiency in educational appliances. What has been stated with regard to the general sufficiency of school accommodation in the country districts is being amply verified by what has taken place since the passing of the Act. The denominational zeal which has been lately called into renewed activity has readily supplied

any deficiencies that there may have been in the educational appliances of the rural districts, and the consequence is that in few country parishes a school-board either has been or is likely to be established. In no two counties in England are children taken away from school at an earlier age than in the rural parishes of Wiltshire and Dorsetshire. As a consequence of this, in no counties is the educational condition of the agricultural labourer more unsatisfactory. Wiltshire and Dorsetshire are, however, so well supplied with schools that the Bishop of Salisbury recently said, as if it were a subject for congratulation, that throughout his diocese, which embraces these two counties, only one school-board had been established, and that was in his cathedral city. The Bishop's statement really amounted to a declaration that throughout his diocese, with the exception of one town, the Education Act would do nothing to increase the attendance of children at school. It can scarcely be doubted that the description which has been given of this diocese is applicable to the working of the Act throughout the agricultural districts generally.

Some time after the above article was published, the Commissioners who were appointed by the late Lord Derby's Government to examine into the condition of women and children employed in agriculture issued their Report. The scope of the inquiry was, however, so much extended that it may be regarded as probably the most exhaustive investigation that has ever been made into every circumstance affecting the entire population who are employed in agriculture. Assistant-Commissioners were sent into various parts of the country, who obtained a great mass of valuable evidence not only from the labourers themselves, but also from clergymen, country gentlemen and farmers, and, in fact, from all who could be supposed to have any special knowledge of the rural poor. All the statements in the above article were based upon personal observation, and are amply confirmed by this evidence. Sometimes the Assistant-Commissioners, in describing the existing state of things, employ language far stronger than any which I have ventured to use. Thus Dr Fraser, the present Bishop of Manchester, who visited the eastern counties as well as Sussex and Gloucestershire, says: "Nothing can be stronger than the language used about the general condition of the cottages of the peasantry; certainly in every one of the agricultural districts, almost in every one of the parishes which I have visited. In one return they are described as 'miserable;' in a second as 'deplorable;' in a third as 'detestable;' in a fourth as a 'disgrace

to a Christian community.'"..."The majority of the cottages that exist in rural parishes are deficient in almost every requisite that should constitute a home for a Christian family in a civilized community."..."It is impossible to exaggerate the ill effects of such a state of things in every aspect—physical, social, economical, moral, intellectual."

Throughout the evidence will be found almost numberless allusions to the low wages and scanty diet of the agricultural labourer.

The whole tenor of the evidence, in fact, justifies the general conclusion, which is apparently drawn by the Commissioners, that the agricultural labourer is not materially so well off now as he has been in many previous periods in the history of this country. It is obvious from statutes that were passed in the reigns of Edward VI. and Elizabeth that every rural labourer had a plot of land attached to his cottage, and this, combined with his right to pasture cattle and to cut turf and firewood on the lord's wastes, enabled him to enjoy a kind of rude abundance. The agricultural labourer was also extremely prosperous throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. This period has been described as "a kind of golden age" to him. Various adverse circumstances soon afterwards came into operation, which caused the condition of the agricultural labourer rapidly to deteriorate; and this deterioration has gone on almost unchecked up to the present time.

The following may be regarded as the most prominent of these adverse circumstances:—The constant wars in which England was engaged at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries made food extremely dear. The enclosure of commons about the same period went on upon so large a scale that the labourers were very generally deprived of their common rights.

Up to 1845 seven million acres of common land had been enclosed by private Parliamentary Bills: a high authority, the late Duke of Newcastle, said that in the case of almost every one of these enclosures, the interests of the poor had been entirely neglected. It is important to remember that, as long as a common is unenclosed, the poor may be said to possess a property which it is impossible for them to alienate. The compensation, however, which they receive when an enclosure takes place is often converted into money; the greater part of this is not unfrequently spent at the public-house, and the succeeding generation is deprived of a valuable privilege without in any way sharing the compensation which has been received for its loss. This reckless and mischievous

system of enclosure has gone on up to the present time; for within the last three years the present Government used all its official influence to hurry through Parliament a Bill which would have enclosed 6,900 acres of land in different parts of the country; out of this whole quantity three acres only were reserved as gardens for the poor, and six acres as recreation-grounds for the public. There still remains a very considerable area of land unenclosed. After seeing the mischief which has been done in the past, the public should watch with the utmost jealousy every proposal for a fresh enclosure. In a country such as England, which, already densely peopled, is still rapidly increasing in population, the preservation of open spaces is a question of the greatest possible importance, as affecting the health and enjoyment of the people. The public may also derive another advantage of the greatest consequence from the land still remaining unenclosed; for such land may some day facilitate the carrying-out of various experiments in rural economy, such, for instance, as the application to agriculture of the principle of associated labour.

The Commissioners seem to attribute the decline in the condition of the agricultural labourer chiefly to the two circumstances just mentioned. Without intending in the slightest degree to underrate the powerful influence which they both exerted, I think that scarcely sufficient prominence is given by the Commissioners to the disastrous consequences brought upon agricultural labourers by a lax administration of the Poor Law. After what I have previously stated, it is not necessary for me to refer at any greater length to this subject.

Perhaps one of the most valuable services rendered by the Commissioners was the bringing forward a considerable amount of most interesting evidence which distinctly proves that the descriptions usually given of the miserable condition of our agricultural labourers are not applicable to the entire country. In the great majority of cases it is almost impossible to overdraw the picture of misery, poverty, and dependence in which the rural labourer ordinarily lives. Northumberland, however, and one or two other northern counties present a most striking contrast to the rest of the country. Mr Henley, a son I believe of the veteran member for Oxfordshire, was the Assistant-Commissioner who visited Northumberland. His able and exhaustive report not only proves how comparatively prosperous the Northumberland labourer is, but from it we can without difficulty perceive what agencies must be brought into operation to make the condition of rural labourers throughout the country equally satis-

factory. Although Mr Henley does not fully account for the circumstance, yet the fact cannot be doubted, after reading the evidence collected by him, that there exists among the Northumberland peasantry an unusual zeal for education. In one place it is stated that a man would be degraded to the condition of a beast in the estimation of his neighbours, if he did not send his children to school. He says the boys seldom leave school till they are eleven or twelve years of age, and then only for the summer months. In the Glendale Union, he states, that one out of seven of the population is at school in the summer, and one out of five in the winter. The latter is a higher proportion than that existing in Prussia, where one out of six is at school. But the evidence obtained by Mr Henley is peculiarly encouraging, because it shows that education has caused a most remarkable degree of prosperity to be enjoyed by the Northumberland labourer: his general condition has become, adds Mr Henley, so satisfactory that if the labourers in other parts of England had been equally well off, the Commission ought never to have been issued. It is shown by the evidence collected by Mr Henley that education exerts a greater influence in raising wages than in the foregoing remarks I have ventured to attribute to it. The Northumberland labourer earns his 15*s.* or 18*s.* a week. He is thus far more than compensated for a loss of a portion of his children's earnings. It is also proved by the high rents prevailing in Northumberland and by the general prosperity enjoyed by the farmer that these highly paid labourers are, in consequence of their superior education and physique, so much more efficient than the poorly paid Dorsetshire labourer that the former labour is far cheaper to the employer than the latter. The superior moral qualities associated with the general diffusion of education seem to have provided a remedy against many of the worst evils which depress the labourer in other parts of the country. Thus a Northumbrian peasant is so determined to live in a good and decent house, that a farmer would be certain to lose all his best labourers if he had not an adequate supply of suitable cottages. Good cottages are consequently as essential as good farm buildings. The higher wages enable better food to be obtained, and this produces a wonderful improvement in the physical condition of the labourers. The evidence collected by Mr Henley also shows that the Northumberland labourers are unusually temperate; there appears to be no special cause, except the higher tastes developed by superior education, to which this marked sobriety is to be attributed.

On one other important point the evidence appears to be con-

clusive. An impression very generally prevails that agricultural work is degrading to women. It cannot be doubted, after the experience obtained from Northumberland, that labour in the fields need not be in any respect degrading to women, and whenever it does exert a degrading influence, this is entirely due to collateral circumstances. In Northumberland perhaps more than in any other county the custom prevails for unmarried women to work in the fields, but, far from its producing any demoralization, Mr Henley emphatically says that when these women are married they become in every respect excellent wives, and their homes are patterns of cleanliness and neatness. It has been often stated that working in the fields is injurious to the health of women; it is, however, only injurious when the women are poorly fed and badly and unsuitably clothed. An abundance of evidence is contained in the Report affirming that the Northumbrian women who have worked in the fields are unusually robust and healthy. Such testimony is of peculiar importance, because selfishness and mistaken philanthropy may any day combine to deprive women of their industrial rights.

H. F.

VIII.

A SHORT REVIEW OF THAT PORTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SCHOOLS' INQUIRY COMMISSION WHICH REFERS TO GIRLS' EDUCATION.*

THERE has lately been placed before the public a series of volumes containing the Report of the Schools' Inquiry Commission. These volumes are full of the most useful and interesting information respecting the condition of Middle-class education in this country; it is not however our purpose to attempt to follow the commissioners and assistant-commissioners through the whole of their laborious investigations, but merely to draw attention to the parts of their reports which refer to the education of girls. In making this attempt it will be endeavoured as far as possible to give the opinion of the commissioners in their own words.

The reports of the commissioners and the assistant-commissioners appointed to inquire into Middle-class education contain much valuable information upon the education of girls, and, as might have been expected, much dissatisfaction is expressed with it. The Report of the commissioners says (p. 548):—

* The *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1868.

"It cannot be denied that the state of Middle-Class Female Education is, on the whole, unfavourable .....Want of thoroughness and foundation, want of system, slovenliness and showy superficiality, inattention to rudiments, undue time given to accomplishments, and those not taught intelligently or in a scientific manner, want of organisation; these might sufficiently indicate the character of the complaints we have received, in their most general aspect."

Mr Stanton says (p. 78, vol. vii.):

"As to Girls' Schools, they are not, with some exceptions, sufficiently places of intellectual training; and in nearly all of them undue prominence is given to what are called accomplishments.....They suffer from the want of some guiding principle, which boys' schools find in the public schools and universities, to give a direction and aim to their studies."

Mr Giffard repeats the same complaint of the "enormous preponderance given to accomplishments over solid acquirements" (p. 208, vol. vii). Again, in Mr Fearon's report on the London Girls' Schools we find that he looks upon both the quality of the teaching and its results as unsatisfactory. He speaks of the way in which arithmetic is taught "as extremely unsatisfactory," and says that the rudimentary training of girls is "unsound, inaccurate, and unsystematic." Mr Hammond says, as the result of his experience, that "the purely intellectual education of girls is scarcely attempted, and, when attempted, it is a complete failure" (p. 478, vol. viii.). Indeed, we might multiply almost indefinitely the complaints which the assistant-commissioners make of the education of girls. We are

sorry to say they are unanimous in their censure. They all lament the time wasted by girls over music. In reading their reports passages similar to the following constantly occur: "Music and singing are considered more important than a knowledge of arithmetic or history, or any general cultivation of the mind. The time wasted on this accomplishment is deplorable." Mr Hammond states that "instrumental music is supposed to be the leading subject of instruction for women, except in the lowest ranks of life" (p. 476, vol. viii.). The assistant-commissioners are also singularly unanimous in complaining of the want of properly trained governesses; and, in Mr Fearon's opinion, this want will never be removed until the higher education of women is amply provided for, and the results of that education authoritatively tested; and he adds with much emphasis: "This matter lies at the root of all improvement in the education of girls, and is the point which I desire most strongly to impress on the commissioners" (p. 395, vol. vii.). He also points out the evil results of the exclusion of women from all professions but that of teaching; one of the chief of these evils is, that it forces all women who have to earn their own living to become governesses, whether they are qualified or not. His remarks on the causes which produce the defective teaching of governesses so well meet the state of the case that we are tempted to extract them *in extenso*.

"The defects in the teaching of these governesses seem principally to arise from want of breadth and accuracy of scholarship, and from want of knowledge of the art of instructing a class.

"*Want of Breadth and Accuracy of Scholarship.*—Owing to the entire absence in this country of any public means of superior education for women, or any regular facilities for their extending their education beyond the age of seventeen or eighteen, there is a lack of that general diffusion amongst them of accurate study and scholarship, which must prevail before there can be an abundant supply of women qualified to teach well in first-grade schools. In the case, no doubt, of a certain number of girls who are brought up from girlhood to become teachers, fairly adequate education is provided by a few educational Homes, and other special institutions. But the effect produced by these praiseworthy societies is like a drop of water in the ocean. The vast majority of female teachers take up employment against their will, and unexpectedly. Except a few enthusiasts or noble-hearted philanthropists, no women become teachers if they can avoid it .....Few girls belonging to the middle classes can feel quite sure that they will not some day have to make their own bread. And if they do so, it is nine chances to one that they will have to do it by tuition. This one consideration suffices to show the utter inadequacy of attempts to secure the competency of female teachers by providing Governesses' Homes and the like. There is only one means of securing this competency, and that is by providing for all English women of the middle class the opportunity of higher liberal education. Culture must begin from above and work downwards, operating first on those who have to diffuse it, and making knowledge more general and more cheap than it has been among women. We must begin by teach-

ing not only all the actual but all the possible teachers, that is, women at large. At present no such means of higher education of women exist; and it is rare, and may be said to be accidental, to find a woman both willing and qualified by her study to teach in a scholar-like way. Moreover, owing to the want of any adequate test, it is extremely difficult for a principal to recognise the merit of a well-educated woman, if such an one should apply for a situation. Proprietors of schools have frequently told me that they were most anxious to secure the services of none but thoroughly qualified mistresses, but that they have no means of judging of such qualifications. It is true that some institutions, such as Queen's College, and many other 'private colleges,' and 'collegiate schools,' give diplomas or 'certificates of knowledge' to their pupils. But such certificates are, for obvious reasons, not satisfactory. What is wanted is an uniform, public, authoritative, and (above all) entirely independent test of knowledge, similar to the examinations of Oxford and Cambridge, or such as might be provided by the opening of the examinations of the London University to women" (pp. 394—5, vol. vii.).

But the educational deficiencies of governesses are not the only disqualifications which a great many of these "excellent ladies" possess for the superintendence of the education and mental development of girls. The disqualification now particularly referred to is a want of ordinary common sense. This was manifested in a very striking way by the manner in which many governesses treated the request of the assistant-commissioners to be allowed to inspect their schools, and

by the absolute refusal of several to give answers to the list of questions which was sent to them by the assistant-commissioners. These questions were constantly characterized as "inquisitorial." One lady expresses her sorrow that "Ministers have nothing better to do than to pry into the ménage of private families, as I consider my establishment, which has been in existence thirty years, and always held the highest position." The absence alike of grammar and common sense in the above is worthy of Mrs Nickleby. The assistant-commissioners were assured that no "woman of spirit" would answer such "inquisitorial" questions, and that "every girl of spirit would leave the room" on their appearance in the school-room. Mr Hammond says that his first application to inspect a ladies' school was met "not exactly with discourtesy, but certainly with undisguised derision." One schoolmistress was so alarmed by Mr Hammond's request to inspect her school, that she called to her aid the clergyman of her parish to protect her from his "inquisitorial" visits. Between them they produced two letters, both in the handwriting of the clergyman, one from him, the other bearing the signature of the lady. In the latter, the mistress of the school, after stating rather irrelevantly that her pupils were the daughters of gentlemen, declined the proposed visit, which she said it would be "dishonourable" in her to allow, and concluded in the following words: "I consider your application an unwarrantable intrusion into my private affairs, to be met with, as now, so in future, by decided refusals on my part." The clergyman's letter is fully as ignorant and ridiculous; it is as follows: "Miss ——,

of ——, in my parish, has informed me of your proposition to inspect her school. Knowing Miss —— very well, and the nature of her establishment, I consider it as strictly and essentially a private school. As such, I should consider it quite secure from any such inquisitorial visit as the one you propose. As the clergyman of the parish, I am in the habit of holding a Bible class in her school twice a week, as well as a Confirmation class. Every regard is paid to the personal comfort of her pupils, and, as far as I can judge, to their educational progress. What further information you can ask for I am at a loss to conceive" (pp. 485—6, vol. viii.). Who could be more unfit to undertake educational duties than the concoctors of these two letters? Yet one takes upon himself the cure of souls, and the other professes to promote the mental, moral, and physical development of a certain number of "daughters of gentlemen." Both appear to be enthusiastically opposed to learning. Mr Fitch (pp. 278—9, vol. ix.) gives somewhat similar instances of the manner in which schoolmistresses received his request to be allowed to visit their schools.

The next complaint urged by the assistant-commissioners is the indifference of parents to the mental development of their daughters. Of course the inferiority of the school and the indifference of the parent to improved education are evils which act and re-act on each other. Schoolmistresses try to provide the style and quality of teaching which they suppose will satisfy parents; and parents, being tolerably well contented with themselves, wish to obtain for their daughters an education similar to what they themselves

have had. Very great blame is attached by the assistant-commissioners to parents, on account of the obstructiveness they often show when schoolmistresses are really anxious to improve the quality of the teaching in their schools. A wholly different class of considerations influence parents in selecting a school for their daughters, from those which operate in deciding their choice of a school for their sons. Mr Hammond, in describing the views of a parent on this subject, says:—

"His first object is to find a well-conducted establishment, frequented by girls of his daughter's own rank, and (if possible) by them exclusively, where the joint influence of teachers and school companions may help to strengthen the good principles instilled at home, and to superadd the finished ease and propriety of manner characteristic of an English lady. His second object is that his daughter may be furnished with certain accomplishments of an ornamental, rather than of an intellectual kind, such as music, drawing, and dancing, to which must be added a taste for information, limited, however, in practice to a few conventional subjects, and a facility in writing and speaking English, and one, or perhaps more, modern languages. What he thinks of last, if he thinks of it at all, is the cultivation of her logical and critical faculties, even though it be only to the small extent of understanding the simplest principles of grammar and arithmetic, and of knowing some leading historical and other facts, with due regard to method and philosophical arrangements."

No one can say that this is an unfair or exaggerated description of the views of an ordinary parent upon the education of his daughters. What Mr Hammond, with

considerable humour phrases, "a taste for information," is almost universally considered to show in a woman quite sufficient mental activity, and even that, when at all keen, is enough to stamp her as a "blue," or as "strong minded."

Another circumstance, which is productive of a great part of the indifference with which the mental development of girls is regarded, is the great difficulty women have in making their mental powers of any pecuniary value. Except by tuition, there is no way in which an ordinarily gifted gentlewoman can earn her own living. This circumstance forces into the profession of teaching nearly all women of the middle class who are obliged to support themselves. As a consequence, the profession is over-crowded, its remuneration scanty, and a large proportion of its members are wholly unfitted for the task they have undertaken. Mr Fitch says, rather unjustly, as we think, to governesses, "It is a special misfortune for the profession of teaching that it is supposed to be 'genteel,' and that it therefore attracts to itself a number of women who wish to get a living, and who are sensitive as to any loss of social position, but who possess no other qualification for the work which they undertake" (p. 284, vol. ix.). Mr Fitch would have been more accurate if he had described the majority of women who support themselves by teaching, not as *wishing* to get their living, but as being absolutely obliged to do so. Neither are they influenced by pride or care of their social position in entering the profession of teaching; they are driven into it, and they endure it notwithstanding the gross indignity with which they are sometimes treated

by their employers, simply because there is no other way in which they can earn money. It is not to be wondered at that a lady should shrink from taking in washing, or from going out as housemaid; such a step would be simply impossible. The only profession, therefore, which is open to women, being over-crowded by ladies who are obliged to earn money, there is no way in which a parent, who does not wish his daughter to be a governess, can see his way to her being able to turn her mental powers to any pecuniary account; and, therefore, there is no pecuniary inducement for him to develop those mental powers to the utmost. This may be a low view to take of the value of education; it is a very low view, but it is one which is taken, perhaps unconsciously, by thousands of parents. They give their sons a good education because it pays; they do not give their daughters a good education because it would not pay. If an apology be due to readers for giving this as one of the reasons of the inferior education of women, the only apology which can be offered is that the writer has frequently heard it urged, even in the Athens of the North, that money spent in educating a woman well is badly invested, and therefore it would be unwise to try to improve her education.

One curious feature in the education of girls is the way in which they have been practically excluded from the great educational endowments of the country. This is sometimes owing to the express intention of the founders to form schools for boys only, but very often it is in direct defiance of the intention of the founders. A large proportion of the free grammar-schools were

endowed by their founders for the purpose of teaching the "children of freemen," "all children born in" such and such a parish. Christ's Hospital, with a gross income of £56,000, was founded with the intention of providing lodging, maintenance, education, and training, free of expense, to poor children. Notwithstanding this, the endowment is applied almost exclusively to the higher education of boys. The claims of girls have been so far admitted that a girls' school does exist in connection with Christ's Hospital; but it gives a third-grade education to eighteen girls, while a first-grade education is provided for 1,192 boys. Other schools are more consistent, and do not in any sense recognise the claims of girls to share in the endowments. Dulwich College, though originally a corporation consisting of a master, warden, fellows, six poor brothers, five poor sisters, and twelve scholars, does not devote a farthing of its gross income, £16,829, to the education of girls.

The only way in which the exclusion of girls from all participation in endowments can be explained, is that hitherto it has not been considered desirable that girls should be well educated. If it were recognised that it was as important for girls to be as well educated as it is for boys, we believe that they would no longer be excluded from sharing the highest educational endowments of the country, not even excepting those of the universities.

We have now mentioned the principal causes which produce the present defective education of girls; they are six, and are briefly here recapitulated:—

1. That girls' schools are not sufficiently places of intellectual training.

2. That in the education of girls undue prominence is given to accomplishments, especially to music.

3. The want of properly trained governesses.

4. The want of an external stimulus and test of the quality of the teaching, such as is supplied to boys' schools by the universities and public schools.

5. The indifference of parents to the mental development of their daughters.

6. That owing to all the professions being closed to women, their higher education is unremunerative.

Although it is melancholy to find the education of a large proportion of the community so deplorably bad as the assistant-commissioners describe the education of girls to be, it is cheering to see that all the causes which produce the inferiority are removable either by social or legislative reform. In no case do the assistant-commissioners assign, as a cause of the present state of the training of women, that they are naturally unfitted to receive and benefit by the highest mental culture. On the contrary, the reports constantly assert that where boys and girls have had equal advantages and similar training, the girls are found to hold their own even in the highest branches of study. In classics and mathematics, girls, when properly taught, were found quite as proficient as boys. Mr Giffard, for instance, says that the absence of classical and mathematical training accounts for much of the inferiority of girls' education; and yet "that there is no natural inaptitude of girls to deal with any of the subjects which form the staple of a boy's education" (p. 200,

vol. vii.). Mr Bryce compares very favourably the teaching capacities of women with those of men of the same general ability and education. Mr Hammond is also of opinion that the mental powers of girls are equal to those of boys. Mr Bompas, and other assistant-commissioners, give most valuable evidence on this point; but to those who are anxious to clear girls from the imputation of innate inferiority, the report of the Rev. James Fraser* on the common school system of the United States and Canada will be of the utmost interest. Whatever may be the advantages or the disadvantages of the common school system,—the object of which, as described by Mr Horace Mann, is to give to all citizens sufficient education to enable them faithfully to discharge all those duties which devolve upon the inheritors of a portion of the sovereignty of the great Republic,—under it boys and girls have exactly similar training and the same advantages. The principles of the system being "perfect social equality and absolute religious freedom" (Fraser, p. 166), and its object being to produce good citizens, the Americans have not fallen into the error of allowing one sex to monopolise the endowed educational institutions of the country. Boys and girls, if not, as is frequently the case, taught in the same schools, receive the same mental culture. One result is that female teachers have a totally different position from that which they occupy in England. Here almost every important subject is taught in the best girls' schools by visiting masters. A schoolmistress in her prospectus never fails to enumerate, with a certain

* The present Bishop of Manchester.

pride, the number of subjects which her "young ladies" have the advantage of studying, under the direction of masters. In America, on the contrary, a great number of teachers, even in boys' schools, are ladies. In describing one of the best of the New York boys' grammar-schools, Mr Fraser says (p. 123), "It was a school of 450 boys, divided into eleven classes, under a principal who had been for many years at its head, five male, and six female teachers." In the New York grammar-schools for girls all the teachers are women. Mr Fraser remarks, "The deference which a woman everywhere commands in America appears thoroughly to penetrate the schools; and I believe these grammar-school mistresses, many of whom are very young, find no difficulty in enforcing discipline or maintaining order."

It is considered enough by some persons to say, in reply to those who wish to see higher education provided for the women of this country, that so doing would Americanise our women; as if the mere fact of their becoming in any degree like American women would destroy in them all that was worth preserving. Perhaps it might destroy a good deal of inanity and helplessness without injuring society. But let us hear what Mr Fraser says of American women. In spite of his evident leaning towards the views of Pericles and St Paul on woman's "sphere" in life, he renders very high praise to the results of the American system. After quoting De Tocqueville's memorable words, "If I were asked to what cause I would principally attribute the singular prosperity and growing force of this people, I would answer, To the superiority of their

women" (*Democracie en Amérique,* ii. p. 240), Mr Fraser says:—

"I too, am not blind, I trust, to the merits nor to the endowments of American women. I recognise and appreciate their force of character, their intellectual vigour, their capacity for affairs, their high spirit, their courage, their patriotism. The Americans may be right in judging, as De Tocqueville says they do judge, that 'the mind of a woman is as capable as the mind of a man to discover naked truth, and her heart as firm to follow it.' And so they have made the mental training, indeed the whole school culture, of boys and girls the same" (Fraser, pp. 192—3).

Mr Fraser, in another page, thus describes the English method of educating women:—

"To us the softer graces are more attractive than the sterner virtues; our object is to train women, before anything and everything else besides, for the duties of the home; we care less in them for vigorous intellects and firm purposes, and more for tastes which domesticate and accomplishments which charm."

What does Mr Fraser mean by "tastes which domesticate and accomplishments which charm"? Perhaps a taste for cookery or music is what is more valued than vigorous intellect and firmness of purpose.

Of the propriety of training women with the express object of fitting them for the duties of the home, we can only say that it is acting on the supposition that the less can contain the greater. The object of all education ought to be to produce good and cultured men and women; in so far as this object is attained will women be fitted not only for the duties of the

home, but for their duties towards their neighbour: for example, to be true and just in all their dealings; to bear no malice nor hatred in their hearts; to keep their tongues from evil speaking, lying and slandering; and to learn and labour truly to get their own living. Women cannot be really good wives and mothers if charming accomplishments and domestic tastes are to be considered their highest virtues; but even if these were—and we shall presently show they are not —the principal qualities which fit women to become wives and mothers, it would be an obvious injustice to treat all women as if they were sure to marry and have children. All girls are not certain to become wives and mothers, but all girls, if they live, are certain to become women; therefore it is more expedient, and of far more practical utility, to train girls with the view of making them good and useful members of society, than to train them expressly for the duties of married life. The observations of the commissioners (p. 21, vol. i.) on the desirability of education being general rather than special, apply equally to boys and girls. Speaking of the witnesses examined before the commissioners, the Report says:—

"Before discussing their opinions on the various subjects of instruction it is necessary to sum up their answers to the preliminary question whether schools should endeavour to give general education, or as far as possible to prepare boys for special employments. On this point there was an almost unanimous agreement in favour of general education. Of course no objection could be raised to the teaching of any subject which, though specially useful in some particular em-

ployment, was either well suited to the general cultivation of the intellect, or could easily be made so. The double purpose served by such a subject would be of necessity a weighty argument in its favour. But special preparation for employments, to the neglect of general cultivation, was all but universally condemned as a mistake. It disorganised and broke up the teaching. It conferred a transitory instead of a permanent benefit, since the boy whose powers of mind had been carefully trained speedily made up for special deficiencies; and very often it taught what soon had to be unlearnt or learnt over again. Book-keeping, for instance, though it was often taught in schools, and with some success, yet was not generally recommended. It was said that the boy who had learnt it often found that the particular system which he had learnt was not that which he afterwards had to practise; while, on the other hand, a boy who had a thorough mastery of arithmetic could learn any system of book-keeping in a very short time."

If it is difficult and undesirable to give a boy a special education which would make him an efficient clerk, is it not much more difficult and undesirable to try, by special education, to fit a girl to become a wife and mother? But the notion that it is right to educate a girl solely with the view of her marrying has its rise in the immorality of public opinion as regards the functions of womanhood. As long as the height of national prosperity is thought to be attained if the population doubles itself in twenty years; as long as women are considered useful members of society in proportion to the number of their children, so long will their intellectual and moral faculties be neglected. Their education

will remain, as it is described by the commissioners, slovenly and superficial, when the highest duties of a wife and mother are practically considered to be to breed children and to keep house. The popular idea is that higher education would be thrown away upon a woman if she married. We have heard of parents saying, "I spared no trouble or expense to give my daughter a good education, and it was completely thrown away, for she married at nineteen;" and the fact that a girl is very likely to marry is often urged as a reason against taking much trouble to procure her a good education. The commissioners state (p. 547, vol. i.) that they received much evidence showing that "a long-established and inveterate prejudice" exists respecting girls, "that, as regards their relations to the other sex and the probabilities of marriage, solid attainments are actually disadvantageous rather than the reverse."

These considerations force upon us the conclusion that the popular view of the duties of wives and mothers is a very low and a very incorrect one; one which assigns almost supreme importance to the animal rather than to the intellectual and moral functions of womanhood. The likelihood of a girl becoming a mother ought to be to her parents one of the strongest inducements to cultivate her mind in such a manner as to bring out its utmost strength, for upon every mother devolve the most important educational duties; from her, in nearly every case, are derived the child's first notions of duty, of right and wrong, of happiness, of a Supreme Being, of immortality. It is frequently asserted that the mental qualities of children more

often resemble those of their mother than those of their father. Whether this is due to physiological causes, or to the fact that upon the mother usually devolves the early training of her children, it is unnecessary to express an opinion; but this being the case, how vastly important for national welfare it is that mothers of children should be persons of large, liberal, and cultured minds. Such women as the one Wordsworth speaks of:—

> "The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
> A perfect woman, nobly planned
> To warn, to comfort, and command."

It is evident that Wordsworth at least considered "endurance, foresight, strength, and skill" more important qualities in a woman than "tastes which domesticate, and accomplishments which charm;" and he does not think that these sterner virtues tend to displace the graceful and lovable qualities which the opponents of the higher education of women often say are compatible only with ignorance and helplessness; for he describes the same woman in the foregoing stanzas of the poem quoted above as possessing these qualities in an eminent degree, as everybody knows who reads that exquisite poem, "She was a phantom of delight." If it be important for the rising generation that mothers should be women of sound and powerful minds, it is almost equally important for the present generation that wives should be so also. For constant companionship with a person of inferior and ill-developed capacities must deteriorate the most powerful mind. A woman is seldom or never so weak as to possess no influence over

her husband; in some degree, either for better or for worse, she is sure to exercise some control over the tenor of his life and thoughts. A woman whose whole life is bounded by her own domestic circle, and who has no thought or care for anything outside it, is certain to infect her husband with this sort of selfishness, to damp, and perhaps destroy his public spirit and sense of public duty. If she does everything she can to make him forget that he is a citizen, he will in time partially or wholly forget it.

Though it is important to show that higher education would fit women better to perform the duties of married life, it is wrong to regard their higher education simply in its relation to marriage. A woman who commences life with a soundly-trained mind and well-developed capacities, will be fitted to perform, with far greater efficiency than had she been badly trained, whatever duties, public or private, may devolve upon her. We repeat that the word "wife" is included in the word "woman;" therefore the object of girls' education should be to produce, not good wives merely, but good women. That the present system does not, in the opinion of the assistant-commissioners, attain this end, is obvious from their reports. Many of them are convinced that the present system of girls' education is answerable for the faults that are most generally complained of in women. Thus Mr Hammond says: "The education given at girls' schools is partly answerable for the vapid characters and frivolous pursuits of idle women" (p. 493, vol. viii.). Mr Fitch also remarks: "Out of this (the present theory of girls' education), too, grows the silliness and mental vacuity which too

often characterize the pupils, and the low dishonouring view which they take of the worth of knowledge in relation to the needs of their future life" (p. 289, vol. ix.).

It, therefore, appears that in the opinion of the commissioners it is of great national importance that the education of girls should be speedily and thoroughly reformed. The question is, what is the best and most expedient way of effecting this reform? And it should also be enquired whether any and what attempts have already been made to remedy the defects in the education of girls pointed out by the commissioners. An attempt will be made to deal with these questions in the following pages.

M. G. F.

IX

THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN*.

I DARESAY you have all noticed when your mind is much engrossed with any particular topic, that in some way or another, nearly everything you hear, see, or read, relating even to subjects quite remote from that with which you are principally occupied, seems to bear upon that engrossing topic, to present it in a new aspect, or to bring some fresh light to bear upon it. Without some such explanation you would perhaps be astonished that the key-note, the text of what I have to say on the education of women, is taken from an essay of Mr Matthew Arnold's on Heinrich Heine. In this essay the following passage occurs:—"Modern times find themselves with an immense system of institutions, established facts, accredited dogmas, customs, rules, which have come to them from times not modern. In this system their life has to be carried forward; yet they have a sense that this system is not of their own creation, that it by no means corresponds exactly with the wants of their actual life, that for them it is customary, not rational. The awakening of this sense is

* A Lecture delivered at Newcastle. November 13th, 1871.

the awakening of the modern spirit. The modern spirit is now awake almost everywhere; the sense of want of correspondence between the forms of modern Europe and its spirit, between the new wine of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the old bottles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or even of the sixteenth and seventeenth, almost everyone now perceives; it is no longer dangerous to affirm that this want of correspondence exists; people are even beginning to be shy of denying it. To remove this want of correspondence is beginning to be the settled endeavour of most persons of good sense." It will readily be perceived how applicable this paragraph is to the subject which occupies us this evening. This awakening of the modern spirit is most conspicuous in all matters that relate to the position and capacities of women, and in none of these subjects has the awakening been more complete or universal than in the matter of education. The sense of want of correspondence between the intellectual training generally given to women, and the wants of actual life, is manifested on every side. Evidences of intense and bitter dissatisfaction at a state of things which shuts women off from the advantages of high education are continually being given both by men and women. If proof were needed of the universality of the impression that women's education is not what it ought to be, it would not be necessary to go farther than the table of contents appended to the Report of the Schools Enquiry Commission. The report of the commissioners, and every report of the assistant-commissioners, deal at considerable length with the subject of girls' schools. It is

not too much to say that thirty years ago the existence of such institutions as girls' schools would have been ignored by a royal commission, and the enquiry would have been confined within the limits of boys' education. The fact that the report of the commission deals with the subject of girls' schools is evidence not only of a newly awakened interest, but that it is at last a recognized fact that the education of girls is not merely a domestic affair, but is a matter of serious national importance.

The report of the commission is deservedly so well known that it is almost unnecessary to quote from it; it is however desirable briefly to refer to it, that it may be seen that my complaints respecting the present education of girls are based on no less an authority than that of the commissioners. In one page of their report they say:—"The general deficiency in girls' education is stated with the utmost confidence, and with entire agreement, with whatever difference of words, by many witnesses of authority. Want of thoroughness and foundation; want of system; slovenliness and showy superficiality; inattention to rudiments; undue time given to accomplishments, and those not taught intelligently or in any scientific manner; want of organization,—these may sufficiently indicate the character of the complaints we have received in their most general aspect." This sentence is a brief summing up of the evidence given in the reports of the assistant-commissioners. Every one of them speaks of the total absence of sound mental training in the education of girls, and many deplore the present condition of things as peculiarly dangerous

to the welfare of the State. These girls, they point out, in a few years will probably be wives and mothers; what effect will the "slovenliness and showy superficiality" of their education then produce? What Mr Arnold calls the awakening of the modern spirit is apparent in every line of these reports. The consciousness that the low quality of women's education is an established fact, an accredited dogma which has come down to us in modern times, from times which are not modern, and that it by no means corresponds exactly with the wants of the actual lives of either men or women.

But it is not merely in the pages of the report of a royal commission that we find evidences of the awakening of the modern spirit with regard to women's education. The awakening seems to have been almost simultaneous over the whole country. There is hardly a great town, certainly there are few in the North of England, that has not made some effort to supply the educational deficiencies of women by means of lectures and the formation of classes on educational subjects. Courses of lectures by the University Professors have been given to women in Edinburgh, Dublin and Belfast. Scholarships and exhibitions for women students have in some instances been established in connection with these classes. Cambridge has taken the lead of the English universities in its efforts to improve the education of women. It was the first to open its local examinations to girls. Before the University of Oxford had followed the example of Cambridge in this respect, a further step in advance had been taken by the latter university, and an uni-

versity examination for women over 18 was established in 1868, to be held annually in various parts of the kingdom. In July 1869, thirty-five candidates presented themselves for examination; in 1870 this number was more than doubled. The report of the syndicate appointed to conduct the examination in 1870, is very instructive. It shows that examinations are not at the present moment what is most urgently required for the improvement of women's education. A test or a standard of education is highly valuable to those who have had the good fortune to get taught. An educational test may, it is true, after a time, have the effect of elevating the general average of teaching up to its own level; but no amount of examinations is of any avail to the vast number of girls and women whose education has been such as that described by the Schools Enquiry Commissioners. Education in the natural order of things must precede examination. The report of the Syndicate appointed to conduct the examination for women over eighteen shows that, of the 84 candidates who came up for examination, 13 withdrew before the examination took place; of the remaining number, 35 passed in Honours, 14 passed in the third class and 22 failed. Various passages in the report indicate the difficulties which stand in the way of those women who make an effort to improve their education. Speaking of the performances of those who were examined in Latin, the Examiner, whilst praising the style of the work, says "The weakest point with all the candidates was the Latin prose composition; they had evidently had but little practice and could not readily apply the knowledge

which their answers to the questions proved them to possess. The Examiner is of opinion that they would have derived great benefit from a little elementary verse composition, and also from reading aloud to a competent teacher; a few simple examples in prosody sufficed to show," adds the Examiner, "*that neither of these exercises had been required of them.*" After praising the English style of the translations, the Examiner continues, "Questions on antiquities, on legal and other technical terms and on grammatical constructions, were for the most part left unanswered, *as though the candidates had had access neither to general works of reference on antiquities, nor yet to editions of the authors selected in which the subject matter is adequately explained.*" Do not these passages show that what women want are teachers and books more than examinations? The performance of these ladies who were examined in Latin, though on the whole highly creditable, bears internal evidence that they had acquired their knowledge under the most disadvantageous circumstances. From other pages of the report I will quote such sentences as "The Astronomy was not at all well done." "In Trigonometry no real knowledge was shown." One can hardly refrain from an involuntary "Of course not." How are women, shut out from all the appliances of high education, to excel in such subjects?

These examinations as well as the university local examinations, are however highly valuable even if they only serve to discover the barrenness of the land they are meant to investigate. Without the evidence which these examinations afford it might have been

more difficult to prove the necessity of giving to women facilities for acquiring a high education.

Before describing the most noteworthy of the institutions now in existence for extending the advantages of high education to women, I will call your attention to another formidable obstacle in the way of the improved intellectual training of girls. This obstacle is the comparative indifference of parents on the subject of their daughters' education. It will be universally acknowledged that, as regards boys' education, the demand for good schools and subsequent university training proceeds not from the lads themselves, but from the parents. Parents bear in mind their son's prospects in life and endeavour in some degree to fit him for them by giving him a suitable education. It must be confessed that many parents are not sufficiently vigilant in securing the best available education even for their boys; but no one who is acquainted with the vast difference made between the quality and quantity of the education of girls and boys in the same family can doubt that the average English parent regards the education of his daughter as a matter of very inferior importance to that of his son. The demand therefore for improvement in the style of teaching in the girls' schools does not proceed from the quarter whence such a demand would be at once effective. The demand proceeds from persons who have paid attention to the subject of education as a branch of sociology, and from girls and young women who are painfully conscious of their defective education and of the almost insuperable difficulties which stand in the way of improving it. To use a

familiar politico-economical phrase, the desire of such persons for an improvement in female education does not constitute an "effectual demand." Desire for a commodity does not become what economists call an effectual demand, unless it is accompanied with the power of purchasing; a combination of the wish to possess and the power to purchase is an "effectual demand," and it is this kind of demand only that exercises an influence on the production of the commodity. The creation of an effectual demand on the part of those who have the power to purchase improved education for girls, *i. e.* parents, is most essential. For without the formation of such a demand all efforts to improve the intellectual training of women must ultimately prove abortive.

The problem therefore resolves itself into two heads: "Why does not this demand already exist?" and "What can be done to create it?"

With regard to the first of these questions—"Why does not this demand already exist?"—many reasons, probably, combine to produce in parents no anxiety to procure for their daughters an education corresponding to that provided for young men at the universities. In the first place, the money spent for the university education of sons of professional men is generally regarded in some degree as an investment, which will bear interest in the shape of additional success in the various careers of after life. The fact that young women in the same rank are not accustomed to enter professions and earn their own livelihood deprives their parents of a strong inducement to give them a sound intellectual training. You may prove indisputably to a parent that

in the interests of society it is as important to educate a girl well who in a few years will be the mother of children, as it is to educate a boy well who is about to become a merchant, or who is going into the Church or to the Bar. You may show that the office of educator and trainer of young children is one that, to be well done, requires a singular combination of mental and moral qualities, and that, therefore, any mental or moral advantage which high education can afford is all important to assist the girl in the difficult task of her after life. Such reasoning may and occasionally does produce some effect, but generally the fact that there is no pecuniary motive to educate a girl well outweighs all abstract arguments. Very frequently, too, the parent cannot afford to give all his children a high education; he is obliged to select from his flock one or two who, he thinks, will profit most by it. In such cases the choice never falls on a girl, because, though her mental gifts may be equal or even superior to those of her brothers, she will not be able to turn, as they may, the money spent upon her education into a profitable investment. The case is still, however, considerably understated. A parent not only sees that there is no special pecuniary advantage to be gained by giving a high education to his daughter, but he generally believes that, taking into consideration what her future career is likely to be, anything corresponding to an university education would be a distinct disadvantage to her. It does not enter into a parent's calculations, when he is deciding on the education of his son, whether such and such a training would be likely to give him less chance of marrying; but, so long as marriage is the only career

for women, this consideration must necessarily enter largely into the decisions of parents with regard to the education of their daughters. It is sometimes stated that more than half the married women of this country marry before they are twenty. The collegiate life of a girl would probably be carried on between the ages of 18 and 21; therefore, with these facts before him, a parent might feel that, as marriage is the only career which society recognises as suitable for women, he would, by sending his daughter away to college, diminish by one-half her only chance of escaping from everlasting young-ladyhood. Besides this arithmetical view of the subject, it would probably be felt by both parents that a college life would in another way diminish their daughter's chances of marriage. The dreaded epithets "blue-stocking" and "learned lady" would float before their mental vision, and the traditional legend of the dislike of men to clever women would operate strongly in deterring them from the unusual course of giving their daughter a really good education. And lastly, an additional obstacle is found in the way of the high mental culture of women, in the natural and in some sense pardonable selfishness of parents. A home that contains one or two bright young girls is a very much happier, more lively, and cheerful place than the same home would be if the brightest and prettiest things in it were at college three-quarters of the year.

In answer, therefore, to the question, "Why do not parents create an effectual demand for the improved education of women?" the following reasons have been alleged. In the first place, owing to all professions and

nearly all remunerative occupations being closed against women, it does not pay in a pecuniary sense to spend large sums upon their education. Secondly, in consequence of women being cut off either by law or custom from all these professions and occupations, marriage remains as the only career by means of which a girl has a chance of escaping from what is generally an unsatisfactory, because a purposeless and idle, life. Marriage, therefore, comes to be regarded as the goal of every girl's existence, and parents are consequently nervously anxious not to adopt any course that will injure their daughter's chances in the matrimonial market. This injury, they imagine, would accrue if they gave their daughters a collegiate education. Thirdly, parents are generally unwilling to lose the pleasure of their daughter's society for any other reason than her marriage. The recapitulation of the reasons alleged in answer to our first question renders it rather an easier matter to find a reply to our second question, "What can be done to create on the part of parents a demand for the higher education of their girls?" In the first place, there is probably no agency which will act with so much certainty as the opening of remunerative employments (professional or otherwise) to women. Every woman who can earn £1000 a year by her own work, as a doctor, as a journalist, or in trade, does more to break down the prejudice of parents than a hundred dissertations on the danger accruing to society and to the State through the present condition of women's education. Parents will gradually wake up to the fact that *there is* an alternative—that marriage is not the only independent and

respectable career open to their daughters; and at the same time they will become aware that if their daughters are to succeed in any trade or profession, their education must be such as to fit them for habits of accurate thought, patience, and thoroughness; a demand will accordingly spring up for girls' schools, in which the characteristics of the education could not be described as "slovenliness and showy superficiality." You will remember that these were the words used by the Royal Commissioners in speaking of girls' education.

The opening of professions to women would act in two ways in inducing parents to demand better education for their daughters; it would supply a pecuniary motive, and it would weaken the fears now felt by parents that a really good education would lessen a girl's chances of marriage; for when it is a customary thing for women to maintain themselves without damaging their social position, they will no longer have to look to marriage as their only resource. Perhaps it may occur to some of those who are present that it would be a bad thing for society in general if some of the inducements to marriage which operate on women were removed. But surely a little further consideration will show that the opening of other careers to women would tend very strongly to increase the happiness of married life. To place marriage in the position of Hobson's choice is obviously not likely to promote domestic happiness; many a woman now marries for the sake of a home, or in order to escape from a life of perpetual childhood under her father's roof. It is needless to say that these are not the motives which should induce a woman to enter into

marriage. Sometimes it is pretended that if women were able to enter into trades and professions, very few or none would be found willing to marry. This is saying very little for the inherent advantages and attractions of marriage; and certainly, if we are justified in drawing any conclusions from the experience of mankind in all countries and in all ages, it may be assumed that the habits of falling in love and marrying are strong enough to take care of themselves, and that it is therefore quite unnecessary to resort to any artificial means of fostering them.

Before quitting the subject of the lack of professional employment for women, I will read you a passage from a very interesting work by Mr John Macdonnell, called "A Survey of Political Economy." He has been proving that the wealth of a country depends on the industry and thrift of its inhabitants, and he adds "The best economical state is of course one where there are no idle people, none who consume and do not produce, none who quit the world without at least replacing the value they have destroyed. We are far removed from this state. And to mention only one of the drawbacks, it is a blot on even societies most thrifty, that nearly one half of their members are compelled by the force of public opinion, petty hindrances, and positive laws, to live the somewhat ignoble and unsatisfactory life of consumers, or to curtail their powers of producing wealth. I speak not of any professed trades-union of recent birth and local character, but of that strong and universal trades-union which is almost as old as the race, which has our earth for its domain, of which all men are the members, and

from which most women are the sufferers. The one sex has appropriated the best remunerated and most enviable of employments, those that bring wealth and honour, and has permitted women to enter only a few professions offering paltry rewards." Remember that these words are written, not by a disappointed woman out of the bitterness of her heart, but by a man who is calmly considering, in its economic aspects, the present enforced idleness of many women. "This is not the place," he continues, "to characterise the morality of this partially artificial separation; but it is befitting here to deplore the waste of labour, the frittering away of excellent capabilities, the enforced idleness of so many fingers and brains that might be busy creators of wealth. As one contemplates these talents spilt on the ground, so to speak, it is almost unavoidable to carry away the idea that free trade between nations, improvements in taxation, and a settlement of the other economical questions which now float on the surface, may be of less moment in an economical point of view than the complete breaking down of those legal and social barriers, whether in the form of statutes or sneers, which prevent women from entering what professions they choose. Clear these barriers out of the way, and there will be a better distribution of talents, those which are now wasted upon sewing, with a few pence a day as remuneration, finding a congenial and lucrative vocation in the lighter handicrafts; but a large proportion of the women who now produce nothing, economically *non-valeurs*, and who may be excused for being such, seeing they are emphatically told by their teachers that doing nothing

is their sphere, and seeing that the professions to which they may resort are monotonous, not lucrative, and far from inviting, will be stimulated to do good work. Can the sisters of men who earn £800 to £1000 a year, be expected to engage in work which brings in only £20 to £30? May we not expect new exertions when they have the prospect little less tempting than their brothers'? For men, there is always, as Daniel Webster said, 'plenty of room higher up,' while the inferior professions were overstocked, and that circumstance constitutes an impulse to the meanly paid workman to toil on; for women there is no 'higher up'—too often inactivity or a pittance is their miserable fate. It is not essential to the realisation of the above hopes that women should prove to be possessed of the same aptitude for labour as men; enough if the field of workers be enormously increased without any increase in the expenditure. Nor is it essential that there should be an utter reversal of present social arrangements, and that all married women, for example, should labour, to the detriment of their children; enough if most unmarried women, and married women without children, should in some fashion help to add to the stock of wealth. This would be a change fraught with far stretching consequences. The discovery of a mode of all but doubling the producing powers of the males without necessitating any increase in the amount devoted to subsistence, would seem to be the chief of economic improvements. It would render shorter hours of labour possible; and celibacy would no longer be encouraged, as it is, by an enormous bribe."

Besides the opening of professions and trades to

women, there are other important means of producing on the part of parents a demand for improved education for their daughters. It is important to observe that it is incorrect to say that no such demand at present exists; it is indeed very far from general, but there are here and there parents who are anxiously seeking for schools or colleges where their girls will receive a sound mental training, and who are fully aware of the difficulty of the task which lies before them. In the interests of women's education this demand, limited though it is, should be met; and it is one of the most encouraging signs for the future that during the last few years attempts more or less successful have been made in various parts of the country to meet this demand. The most noteworthy of these schemes for providing means of higher education for women, are the College for Women at Hitchin, the Lectures for Women at Cambridge, and the admission of Women to the classes of some of the Professors of London University College. The Hitchin College which was started about two years ago, provides for women nearly all the advantages that a young man is supposed to derive from residence in an university. The course of study and the mode of life are very similar to those of the students at Oxford and Cambridge. The college lectures are delivered by university men, and the students have hitherto been permitted to be examined for their Little-go by the university examiners. About 15 months ago five of them were so examined; the examination was carried on in Cambridge at the same time as the Little-go; and as the women students had had the same duration of college training as the under-

graduates, and as they had the same papers and the same examiners, their greater comparative success in the examination than that achieved by the undergraduates, affords some proof that women are as capable of benefiting from higher education as men are. For in this examination almost half of the men were plucked; while all the five women passed, four in the first class and one in the second. The number of the students at Hitchin is steadily increasing, as are also the number and value of scholarships in connection with the college. Nothing can be more desirable than that the Hitchin college should ultimately prove completely successful, and thus fulfil the promise of its commencement. The experience already gained by its two years' existence is sufficient to show that the college will not fail either from want of pupils or of lecturers; its only element of danger appears to be a pecuniary one. The college is not self-supporting, and funds are at the present moment urgently required for building and other purposes. Every one who has had any experience in the art of begging knows how much more difficult it is to obtain money for any public object connected with girls or women, than it is for similar objects for the benefit of boys or men. It is therefore to be feared that the sum required to render the success of the Women's College an immediate certainty will not be very readily forthcoming.

The lectures for Women at Cambridge were started in the Lent-term of 1870. The lectures are delivered (with the exception of those on modern languages) by the University Professors and the College Lecturers. By adopting this plan it was rightly imagined by the

first promoters of the scheme that women would indirectly obtain some share in the benefits derived from the endowments of the University and the Colleges. For the Professors and the Lecturers, being constantly engaged in teaching and deriving their incomes from these endowments, have kindly consented to give lectures to the Women's Classes, on their own subjects, for a very insignificant remuneration—for in fact a much smaller sum than they would require if they were not well paid for their University and College work. These lectures have been principally attended by ladies resident in Cambridge; there has however been from the first a small but steadily increasing number of women who have come to live in Cambridge for the sole purpose of attending the lectures. In consequence of the desire that has thus been manifested by women in various parts of the country to benefit by these lectures, a house has been opened for their reception, presided over by Miss Clough, a lady in every respect eminently qualified for the work. Five exhibitions of the united annual value of £135 have been given by various friends of the scheme, to be awarded to candidates who excel in the University Examinations for Women. Attendance at the lectures is required as a condition of holding these exhibitions. Up to the time of the opening of the house this scheme has been, with the exception, of course, of the exhibitions, entirely self-supporting; and even now that the expense of renting and furnishing a house has been incurred, a comparatively small sum of money would place the institution beyond the reach of pecuniary troubles. At the present moment the success of the scheme owes

everything to the tact, devotion and generosity of its first promoter, Mr Henry Sidgwick of Trinity College, Cambridge. Its financial soundness and its capability of continual expansion and development are the peculiar advantages of the Cambridge Lecture Scheme. It is still almost in what may be described as a chrysalis state, but it may be hoped that it will in time go far towards solving the problem of the higher education of women.

The good accomplished by the Hitchin College and the Cambridge Lectures does not rest with the persons who come within their direct educational influence. They are already doing much towards popularizing the notion that education is as good a thing for girls as it is for boys; and they are gradually disabusing people's minds of the tradition that a woman who has been taught Greek and Mathematics must be a sort of griffin of no particular sex, hideous to look at, and unbearable in all the social relations of life. I may quote innumerable pictures in Punch as evidence that this is scarcely an exaggerated description of the legendary "strong-minded" woman; the Hitchin and Cambridge students will make this legend more palpably false than ever. It cannot but have a good effect in inducing parents to give their daughters a sound mental training, to see from the example of other girls that a high education greatly adds to their social attractiveness, and also to their moral excellence. Few will deny that this is the case with regard to men; that it is not so generally recognized a fact with regard to women may be accounted for by the absence, up to the present time, of good educational machinery for

women. The natural conservatism of the human heart is content with this state of things. Women, it says, never have had the kind of education that Cambridge and Hitchin are trying to supply, women are very well as they are; change is dangerous; and it is good to let well alone. Change may be dangerous, but it is inevitable; with everything around them moving and progressing, it is impossible that women alone, of all things in the world, should remain "an ever fixed mark." It has not been so in the past, women have always moved on with the times they lived in. If it were not so, civilization would have had no influence on them, and they would have remained savages, or perhaps, if we accept theories contained in "The Descent of Man," jelly fish. No power is sufficiently strong to prevent women being acted upon by the influences by which they are surrounded; and with everything about them changing and progressing, they must change and progress. The only question is whether this progress shall be unrestricted, whether it shall be free, spontaneous, and gradual; or whether every effort should be put forth to cramp it, and it should consequently be rendered sudden, spasmodic, and violent. If the former alternative is selected, then must women have the free scope for the development of their faculties which a good education affords.

Recent events in France seem to be typical of what may be expected from a nation, or from any section in the community that has been least accustomed to a free, spontaneous, and gradual progress in social, intellectual, and political development. The centralization of the French system of government is proverbial;

the Government is constantly interfering with and cramping the freedom of social, educational, municipal and political movements; and the progress of the French nation, instead of being healthy and gradual, has been spasmodic and convulsive, till one wonders at last how many more times France will survive the alternate courses of despotism and revolution. In the recent revolution of the Commune, as well as in previous revolutions, it has been remarked that the women were specially conspicuous for their violence and desperation. It is perfectly natural that this should have been the case. Despotism produces revolution; and it is but natural that those who have been the most despotically treated, who have had the fewest social and civil rights, and the most niggardly educational opportunities, should be the most violent and the most revolutionary. There is no country so safe from revolutions as one in which all the citizens are allowed perfect freedom. Freedom is nothing but power to exercise the faculties, and how can the faculties be exercised if they are not cultured? Or in what way will they be exercised by those whose mental training is such as that described by the Royal Commissioners in speaking of girls' schools? It is no exaggeration to say that the present state of women's training and education is a serious source of national danger, and this not only in a social but also in a political sense.

In nearly all the great crises of English history the just demand of the people for intellectual and political freedom has been granted in time to prevent a revolution. The signs of the awakening of the modern spirit have been taken heed of, and from time to time the

"immense system of institutions, established facts, accredited dogmas, customs, rules," inherited from past generations, have been modified in order to bring them into closer correspondence with the needs of modern life. It is to be hoped that this course will be adopted with regard to women's education, and that no artificial barriers will be allowed to exclude women from the highest mental culture the country can afford.

Among other signs of a newly-awakened interest in the education of girls, none is more significant than the almost universal acknowledgment that in the matter of educational endowments girls have not received their fair share. Much has not at present been done to restore to girls for educational purposes the funds that were originally intended for them; but the schemes of the endowed schools commissioners for the improved administration of educational endowments tend in this direction; and it may confidently be hoped that the commissioners will fulfil the anticipations they have raised by neglecting no opportunity of extending to girls the benefits of the great educational endowments of the country. A recent number of *Blackwood* contains an interesting account of an endowed grammar school for girls which has just been started at Keighley, in Yorkshire, in accordance with schemes of the endowed schools commissioners. Differences of opinion exist as to advantages of endowments; and it is affirmed by some that they injure the objects they are intended to promote. But, however forcibly these objections may apply to indiscriminate free education, it has never been shewn that they apply to an administra-

tion of the endowments as rewards for efficiency in the shape of scholarships and exhibitions. The stoutest opponent of endowments would be obliged to confess that at present girls' education has never suffered from their baneful influence. It is astonishing that, among the ranks of those who object to endowments, some advocate of the "rights of men" has not rebelled against the imposition of the burden of nearly all the educational endowments of the country on men and boys; it would be difficult to find any logical excuse for the exemption of women and girls from bearing their share of the disadvantages of endowments. There can be no reason why, if endowments are necessarily so mischievous, all the bad effects they are capable of producing should be borne by one sex alone. Women are supposed to be peculiarly and heroically unselfish; they would cheerfully consent to relieve their long-suffering brethren of half their complaint. If, on the contrary, endowments produce a good effect on education, it is manifestly unjust to deprive one half of the community of any share in them.

Nearly thirty years ago, in a review of a book called the *Claims of Labour*, Mr Mill pointed out that it is not on the rich, but on themselves that the poor must rely to better their condition and to keep their wages high. Self-reliance, he said, was the first and education the second of the remedies for the then condition of the labouring classes. Speaking of education, he added, "It is, indeed, not the principal, but the sole remedy if understood in its widest sense." We hear a great deal now about the claims of women; and these words about the claims of labour will bear being re-

peated with a different application. The remedies which the condition of women needs are self-reliance and education; and the latter is the sole remedy if understood in its widest sense. This widest sense is one that embraces much more than is usually implied by the word. Whatever acts upon the mind is properly education; and as long as the social surroundings of women encourage them in frivolity, the good effected by a sound school education will be to a large extent counteracted. But the first step towards improving the influences by which women are surrounded is to afford them the means of a good school and college training. Women with cultivated minds will not rest contented with lives of frivolity and dependence; they will demand and obtain something different; something which corresponds with their previous training, just as the present social condition of women now too often corresponds with the "showy superficiality" of their schools.

M. G. F.

X.

THE ELECTORAL DISABILITIES OF WOMEN*.

THE subject of this Lecture is one which few are prepared to discuss quite dispassionately. Most people are either enthusiastically in favour of the extension of the suffrage to women, or are violently opposed to it. The former are inclined to think that those who disagree with them must be blinded by prejudice or wilfully opposed to the principles of justice and freedom; the latter look upon a "woman's rights" woman as the incarnation of all that is repulsive; and a woman's rights man, they think, must be bereft of his senses. I desire to approach the subject of the claims of women to the suffrage in a different spirit to either of these contending parties. I will attempt to state fairly and impartially the main arguments on both sides. If I fail in doing justice to the views of those with whom I differ, I shall not do so wilfully, but through ignorance. I will only add, before entering upon the general subject, that in my opinion this is not exclusively a woman's question; above all, it is not one in which the interests of men and women are

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opposed. If the exclusion of women from political power be right and just, women as well as men are interested in maintaining it; if it be unjust and antagonistic to the principles of freedom, then men as well as women are interested in destroying it. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," is as true as regards national as individual life. I will now at once proceed to give a categorical list of the principal arguments urged against the removal of electoral disabilities of women. You will probably observe that all these arguments could not be used by the same person, as some of them neutralize others. It is, however, better to mention them all, as I am anxious not to omit anything which has been urged in objection to women's suffrage. The objections are :—

1. Women are sufficiently represented already by men, and their interests have always been jealously protected by the legislature.

2. A woman is so easily influenced that if she had a vote it would practically have the same effect as giving two votes to her nearest male relation, or to her favourite clergyman.

3. Women are so obstinate that if they had votes endless family discord would ensue.

4. The ideal of domestic life is a miniature despotism. One supreme head, to whom all the other members of the family are subject. This ideal would be destroyed if the equality of women with men were recognised by extending the suffrage to women.

5. Women are intellectually inferior to men and physically weaker than men.

6. The family is woman's proper sphere, and if she

entered into politics, she would be withdrawn from domestic duties.

7. Women are very superior to men, and political excitement would contaminate them and destroy their modesty and purity.

8. The line must be drawn somewhere, and if women had votes they would soon be wanting to enter the House of Commons.

9. Women do not want the franchise.

10. Most women are Conservatives, and therefore their enfranchisement would have a reactionary influence on politics.

11. Women are not and cannot be soldiers.

12. The indulgence and courtesy with which women are now treated by men would cease, if women exercised all the rights and privileges of citizenship. Women would, therefore, on the whole, be losers if they obtained the franchise.

13. The extension of the suffrage to women would disturb the whole foundations of society, obliterate the distinctions of sex and the functions of the sexes.

14. There is nothing in the Bible in favour of women's suffrage.

15. The exercise of political power by women is repugnant to the feelings and quite at variance with a due sense of propriety.

16. The notion that women have any claim to representation is so monstrous and absurd, that no reasonable being would ever give the subject a moment's serious consideration.

The first of these arguments, viz. that women are sufficiently represented under the present system, is an

old friend. Its face must be very familiar to all who took part in or remember the great agitation which preceded the Reform Bill of 1867. Those who were opposed to an extension of the suffrage were never weary of repeating that working men were quite well represented; there was no need to give them votes, for their interests were watched over with the most anxious solicitude by noblemen and gentlemen, who knew far better than the artizans themselves, what was good for the working classes. We all know that this opinion was not shared by working men; they pointed to the inequality of the law relating to masters and servants, and the unjust efforts which legislation had made to suppress trade societies. They said, "These laws are unequal and unfair, they will not be amended until we have some hand in choosing the law-makers." Besides this, they said, "We bear a large portion of the taxation of the country; for every pound of tea and sugar we consume we contribute so much to the national revenue, and in common justice we ought to be allowed to exercise a corresponding control over the national expenditure." For years and years these arguments were repeated in every town in Great Britain; orators like Mr Bright, Mr Ernest Jones, and Mr Cobden, devoted immense energy and splendid eloquence in forcing the claims of the working men to representation on the reluctant middle classes. We all know how that struggle terminated; the obstacles were at length surmounted, and the rights of working men to citizenship were fully recognised. Now I appeal to working men and to all who took their side in the great reform agitation, not to cast aside and

repudiate the very arguments which they found so useful during that struggle. I would say to them, "You have reached the top of the wall, don't push down the ladder by which you have ascended." Apply your arguments to the case of women. Are women sufficiently represented? Are there no laws which press unjustly on them? Is that state of the law equitable which relates to the property of a married woman? Is the law equitable which gives a married woman no legal right to the guardianship of her own children? Perhaps you do not know that "the married women of this country, when their children are seven years old, have no kind of power to prevent their children from being removed if their husbands choose to remove them!" Would this be the case if women were virtually represented? Finally, using the very same argument which has been so often applied to the working classes—Is it right or just that anyone should be forced to contribute to the revenue of the country, and at the same time be debarred from controlling the national expenditure? Either this argument is good for nothing, or it applies to women as forcibly as it does to men. I think it does apply both to men and women, and that, therefore, it is not accurate to say that women are already sufficiently represented, and that their interests are, under the present system, fully protected.

Now let us turn to the second argument urged against the extension of the suffrage to women, namely, a woman is so easily influenced that if she had a vote it would practically have the same effect as giving two votes to her nearest male relation, or to her favourite

clergyman. This is a curious argument; if it were applied indiscriminately to both men and women, very few people indeed would have votes. For instance, it might be said that the *Times* newspaper exercises an extraordinary influence over the political opinions of thousands of people. This is perfectly true; nearly everyone must have noticed how, in ordinary society, the conversation of nine people out of ten echoes the general tone of the leading articles in the day's *Times*. Now it may be said, following out the argument just quoted, the effect of giving all these people votes is only to multiply a million-fold the voting power of the editor of the *Times*, or the writers of the articles in that journal; therefore all people who take their political views from the *Times* ought to be precluded from exercising the franchise. By carrying out the principle, nearly everyone would be disfranchised, except the great leaders of political thought, such as Mr Gladstone, Mr Disraeli, Mr Bright, Mr Mill, Lord Salisbury, and the editors of some of the principal papers. For there are very few indeed whose political opinions are not biased by the views of some of these distinguished and able men. But perhaps this argument, that women's suffrage would only double the voting power of some men, can best be answered by making way for the next argument, namely, that women are so obstinate, that if they had votes, endless family discord would ensue. Now the people who urge this as a reason why women should not be allowed to exercise the franchise, seem to have an erroneous notion of what a vote is. The mere possession of a vote does not confirm or intensify any opinion. If any man

here, at present without electoral power, became a voter to-morrow, would the mere possession of a vote effect any change in his political convictions? A vote is not an opinion, but an expression of opinion. Now let us suppose the case of a family in which the husband and wife hold similar political views; their talk is probably often of politics, and I cannot see that it would make any difference to their domestic happiness if the wife could vote as well as her husband. But you say it is all very well for me to illustrate my argument by the case of a husband and wife whose political views are similar; how would it answer for a wife to have a vote if she disagreed with her husband's political opinions? I reply by asking in return—how does the present system answer? In those cases in which the husband and wife hold different political opinions, one of three things happens: either politics are suppressed as a subject of conversation—the husband goes his own way, and the wife never interferes or obtrudes her own views; or the husband and wife are sensible enough to discuss political subjects and defend their respective opinions with energy, and yet without temper; or else, finally, they take no pains to smoothe over or hide their differences. The wife, for instance, fasts every 30th of January, in honour of the sacred memory of King Charles the martyr; whilst the husband hangs up the death warrant of that monarch, and treasures it as a glorious memento of British freedom. Now in each of these cases the perfect concord and sympathy which form the ideal of marriage are more or less destroyed. What is it which destroys this concord and sympathy? The answer must be—essential

difference of opinion on a subject constantly affecting every-day life. It is the divergence of opinion which destroys the harmony, not the expression of that divergence. Under the present system women cannot be prevented from having political opinions, or from expressing them, and I venture to think that if they had votes there would be more domestic harmony on political subjects than there now is; for then marriages would not so frequently take place between those who hold diametrically opposite political views. Suppose, for instance, that in order to insure conjugal harmony on religious matters, a law were passed to prevent all women going to church. The advocates of such a law might say, "Suppose an Evangelical married a Roman Catholic, what disagreement it would lead to, if the husband went off to one place of worship and the wife to another." As a fact such marriages seldom take place; for it is recognised that women have a right to think for themselves on religious subjects, and there is therefore a strong and a most reasonable feeling against marriages between people of opposite religious opinions. Would not the same feeling come into existence against marriages between people of opposite political views, if the political independence of women were recognised? If this feeling were prevalent, I believe a higher harmony than any yet generally known would gradually pervade domestic life.

Let us now consider the validity of the fourth objection raised against the enfranchisement of women, namely, "The ideal of domestic life is a miniature despotism, in which there is one supreme head, to whom all other members of the family are subject.

This ideal would be destroyed if the equality of women with men were recognised, by extending the suffrage to women." I am ready at once to concede that if the truth of the premise is granted, the truth of the conclusion must be granted also. Family despotism would receive a deadly blow from the extension of political power to women. But let us inquire how and why men—Englishmen at least—have come to consider despotic national government immoral, and then let us see whether despotic family government differs essentially in principle from other despotisms. First let us enquire why despotic national government has been so successfully opposed in this country, and why representative government has been set up in its place. It may be briefly said that despotic government has been got rid of in this country because it has been felt to interfere unwarrantably with individual liberty. The leaders of popular rights from the time of Magna Charta to this day have always insisted on the importance of preserving individual liberty. Why has the name "Liberty" always had such a magic spell over men? Why has liberty been valued more than life itself by all those whose names make our history glorious? Why have our greatest poets sung the praises of liberty in words that will never be forgotten as long as our language lasts? Is it not because it has been felt more or less strongly at all times that man's liberty is essential to the observance of man's duty? A contemporary philosopher has thus analysed the right of mankind to liberty. He says, "It may be admitted that human happiness is the Divine Will. We become conscious of happiness through the sensations. How

do we receive sensations? Through what are called faculties. It is certain that a man cannot hear without ears. Equally certain that he can experience no impression of any kind unless he is endowed with some power fitted to take in that impression; that is, a faculty. All the mental states, which he calls feelings and ideas, are affections of his consciousness, received through his faculties. There next comes the question—under what circumstances do the faculties yield those sensations of which happiness consists? The reply is—when they are exercised. It is from the activity of most of them that gratification arises. Every faculty in turn affords its special emotion; and the sum of these constitutes happiness; therefore happiness consists in the due exercise of all the faculties. Now if God wills man's happiness, and man's happiness can be obtained only by the exercise of his faculties, then God wills that man should exercise his faculties; that is, it is man's duty to exercise his faculties, for duty means the fulfilment of the Divine Will. As God wills man's happiness, that line of conduct which produces unhappiness is contrary to His Will. Therefore the non-exercise of the faculties is contrary to His Will. Either way then we find the exercise of the faculties to be God's Will and man's duty. But the fulfilment of this duty necessarily supposes freedom of action. Man cannot exercise his faculties without certain scope. He must have liberty to go and come, to see, to feel, to speak, to work, to get food, raiment, shelter, and to provide for all the needs of his nature. He must be free to do everything which is directly or indirectly requisite for the due satisfaction of every mental and bodily want.

Without this he cannot fulfil his duty or God's Will. He has Divine authority therefore for claiming this freedom of action. God intended him to have it; that is, he has a right to it. From this conclusion there seems no possibility of escape. Let us repeat the steps by which we arrive at it. God wills man's happiness. Man's happiness can only be produced by the exercise of his faculties. Then God wills that he should exercise his faculties. To exercise his faculties he must have liberty to do all that his faculties naturally impel him to do. Then God wills that he should have that liberty. Therefore he has a *right* to that liberty." The only limitation to perfect liberty of action is the equal liberty of all. "Liberty is not the right of one, but of all. All are endowed with faculties. All are bound to fulfil the Divine Will by exercising them. All, therefore, must be free to do those things in which the exercise of them consists. That is, all must have rights to liberty of action. Wherefore we arrive at the general proposition that everyone (man or woman) may claim the fullest liberty to exercise his faculties compatible with the possession of like liberty by every other person*." Never has the basis of individual liberty been more clearly explained than in this passage. It proves conclusively that despotism being antagonistic to the principle of "the perfect freedom of each, limited only by the like freedom of all," is at variance with the Divine will. How then can the ideal of family life be despotism, when despotism is proved to be antagonistic to the Divine will?

If I have dwelt at some length on the importance of recognising the real basis of the rights of man, it is

* *Social Statics.* Herbert Spencer.

not to prove to you that these rights exist,—all in this room are probably willing to concede that,—but to "show that the rights of women must stand or fall with those of men; derived as they are from the same authority; involved in the same axiom; demonstrated by the same argument." Much more could be said in defence of the assertion that despotic family government is very far removed from the ideal state. If time permitted I think it could be shown that command is blighting to the affections, and that where anything approaching the ideal of domestic happiness at present exists, the subjugation of all members of the family to the husband and father is not enforced. But it is necessary to pass to the consideration of the next objection to the extension of political power to women, namely, that women are intellectually and physically weaker than men. I am not going to enter upon the vexed question whether the mental powers of men and women are equal. It is almost impossible from want of evidence to prove whether they are or not. It may be very interesting as a philosophical discussion, but I maintain that it is quite irrelevant to the present subject,—that is, whether women ought to have political power. Suppose it could be proved beyond the slightest doubt that on the average the intellectual powers of women were inferior to those of men. If this were fully and satisfactorily established, as a fact, it would not furnish the slightest justification for depriving women of electoral power. Suppose it were also proved that the intellectual powers of the inhabitants of the north of England are superior to those of the inhabitants of the south of England. I can

assure you I have often heard very accomplished people assert seriously that this is the case. Would you recognise that as a reason why the inhabitants of the south of England should be deprived of electoral power? Would the people of London be willing to relinquish their right to the franchise if it were proved to demonstration that on an average and taking them altogether they were intellectually inferior to the inhabitants of Edinburgh? It is ridiculous to suggest such a thing, and yet this absurdity is exactly similar to what is really urged against allowing women to exercise the franchise. But the question may be looked at from another point of view. It is said that women on the whole are not the intellectual equals of men. Whether this is true I neither affirm nor deny; but even the most ardent asserters of the inferiority of women have never said that all women are inferior to all men. In the sphere of Government I need only mention Zenobia, Maria Theresa, and Elizabeth to remind you that these women's names stand pre-eminent. Let us hear what the authority previously quoted has to say on this subject. Granting for the sake of argument, that the intellect of woman is less profound than that of man, he adds "Let all this be granted, and let us now see what basis such an admission affords to the doctrine that the rights of women are not co-extensive with those of men:—

"1. If rights are to be meted out to the two sexes in the ratio of their respective amounts of intelligence, then must the same system be acted upon in the apportionment of rights between man and man.

"2. In like manner, it will follow, that as there are here and there women of unquestionably greater ability than the average of men, some women ought to have greater rights than some men.

"3. Wherefore, instead of a certain fixed allotment of rights to all males and another to all females, the hypothesis involves an infinite gradation of rights, irrespective of sex entirely, and sends us once more in search of those unattainable desiderata,—a standard by which to measure capacity, and another by which to measure rights. Not only, however, does the theory thus fall to pieces under the mere process of inspection; it is absurd on the very face of it, when freed from the disguise of hackneyed phraseology. For what is it that we mean by rights? Nothing else than freedom to exercise the faculties. And what is the meaning of the assertion that woman is mentally inferior to man? Simply that her faculties are less powerful. What then does the dogma that because woman is mentally inferior to man she has less extensive rights, amount to? Just this—that because woman has weaker faculties than man, she ought not to have like liberty with him to exercise the faculties she has!"

The argument respecting the inferiority of the physical strength of women can, I think, be allowed to pass without a very lengthy dissertation. Of course everyone will admit that the majority of women are not so strong as the majority of men. If this fact had any bearing at all on the political status of women, I think it would be on the side of their enfranchisement; for being naturally weaker they suffer more from any artificial inequality than they would if their physical

strength was equal to that of men. No one will deny that although their physique is less robust, women have great powers of endurance of pain and fatigue. However this may be, I have yet to learn that a certain standard of physical strength is in this country a necessary qualification for the suffrage. Those who urge this objection would probably desire a "putting the weight" Reform Bill; and would like to see a cabinet composed of prize-fighters, athletes, acrobats and ballet girls.

We now pass to the next objection to women's suffrage—that the family is woman's proper sphere, and if she entered into politics she would be withdrawn from her domestic duties. I may mention in passing—it is a fact to which I do not attach any special importance or regret—that there are some million or so of women in this country without families and without domestic affairs to superintend. The number of women is constantly in excess of the number of men, and so there must always be a certain percentage of women unmarried, and who therefore have no families to be withdrawn from. It is all very well to tell a woman that her sphere is to be a wife and a mother, when there must always be a large number of women unmarried, owing to the simple fact that there are more women in the world than men. But let us look at the case of women who are married, and see whether the objection that politics would withdraw them from domestic duties is valid. I should like to find out exactly how many hours in the year an elector in such a town as this devotes to his political duties. Do you think that on an average, taking one with

another, they spend an hour a week, every week in the year, in discharging their electoral duties? I don't know whether they do, but I doubt it. I don't think an elector, unless he is engaged in some particular work, such as superintending the registration, or as secretary of some political society, need devote as much as an hour a week, no, nor half-an-hour a week, to duties which the franchise imposes on him. Then what does this objection, that the right to vote at Parliamentary elections would withdraw women from domestic duties, really come to? Why soon it will be objected that women should not go to church or out for a walk, because so doing withdraws them from their domestic duties. But it may be urged that it is not merely the exercise of the franchise, but all that an interest in political questions involves,—the reading of newspapers, the attending of meetings, and the like —that would have a mischievous influence in withdrawing women from their domestic duties. But surely the wife and mother of a family ought to be something more than a housekeeper or a nurse—how will she be able to minister to the mental wants of her husband and her children if she makes the care of their physical comforts the only object of her life? I do not say that physical comfort is to be despised, but if there is no moral and intellectual sympathy between a husband and wife, or between a mother and her children, a permanent and life-long injury is inflicted on them all, which no amount of physical comfort can in the slightest degree compensate. It is, however, quite erroneous to suppose that an attention to domestic duties and to intellectual pursuits cannot be

combined. There is no reason whatever, why wives and mothers should not cultivate their minds and at the same time give proper attention to their domestic affairs. As far as my experience goes, the notion that a woman, in order to manage her house and family well, must devote her whole time and mind to it and do nothing else, is quite incorrect. If I were asked to name the most orderly, neat, bright, and best managed houses that I am acquainted with, I should name those which are respectively presided over by women whose names are justly celebrated for their achievements in literature and science, or for their activity in promoting educational and social reform. Perhaps my experience is exceptionally favourable, but I do not think I know one distinguished woman whose home does not do credit to her taste, refinement, and love of order. I do not, therefore, think the plea that the franchise would withdraw women from their domestic duties is a valid objection to their enfranchisement.

This argument also contains another grave flaw. It tacitly assumes that people who have votes have nothing else in the world to do than to consider to whom they shall give them; whereas I think it will be readily admitted that the great mass of the electors of this country are as much engrossed in trade or in professions as women are in their domestic affairs. We now come to the next objection: viz. that women are very superior to men, and that, in the words of Mr Bouverie, "women could not be brought into contact with the rough occupations of men without defiling their modesty and purity." Nearly all the speakers

against Mr Jacob Bright's Women's Disabilities Bill in the House of Commons this year (1871) laid great stress on this argument. It is one that always surprises me, especially when it comes from that favoured portion of the human race who are supposed to be the monopolizers of logic and the reasoning faculties. If it be true that one sex is so superior to the other that to associate the one with the other in the performance of the duties of political life would be "contaminating" and "defiling," with which do you think political power ought to rest—with the contaminator or the contaminated—with the defiler or the defiled? It is not necessary to dwell any longer on this argument. I suspect even those who employed it (and it stood a good deal of wear and tear in the House of Commons this year) could hardly do so without laughing in their sleeves.

We now come to the eighth objection. That the line must be drawn somewhere, and if women had votes they would soon be wanting to enter the House of Commons. This objection was some years back considered a conclusive argument against removing the electoral disabilities of working men. At any rate, said the Tories, let us have gentlemen in the House of Commons—fancy sitting next a man who didn't sound his h's. They were also quite certain that working men would be great failures in the House. We all know the reply of the Reformers to such objections as these. They said, "These are questions for constituencies to decide; they are not likely to select a man to serve them in the House of Commons unless he is capable of devoting sufficient time, trouble, and ability

to the discharge of his duties." The selection of a fit person to serve them in Parliament may safely be left to constituencies. At the present time there is no necessity to pass a law that a man wholly immersed in the conduct of a large business should not offer himself as a candidate for a seat in Parliament. All these things are settled by candidates and constituencies without any legislative interference. As Mr Mill very justly says, there is no necessity to pass laws to forbid people doing what they cannot do. There is no Act of Parliament needed to enact that none but strong-armed men should be blacksmiths. And so it would prove if all the electoral disabilities of women were swept away. The would-be-witty caricatures of sickly women fainting in the House of Commons under the weight of their legislative responsibilities would lose their brilliancy and point in the cold light of stern reality. No constituency would deliberately choose a representative who would be quite incapable of serving it faithfully and well. All questions about who should or who should not have seats in Parliament may safely be left to constituencies.

I now turn to the consideration of the ninth objection to the extension of political power to women—that women do not want votes. Notwithstanding the obvious reply that a considerable number of women do want votes, and are continually petitioning Parliament to remove their electoral disabilities, I must confess that this objection to the enfranchisement of women appears to me more formidable than any other which has ever reached me. Of course it makes no difference at all so far as abstract justice is concerned; but still in

practical politics abstract justice does not usually weigh much with statesmen, unless it is accompanied by an urgent and pressing demand for the amelioration of the law. There must always be a certain adaptation between the characters of the people and the rule under which they live. The existence of the Irish Church Establishment was as much opposed to abstract justice in 1769 as it was in 1869, but disestablishment did not take place until the demand for it was so urgent that it could no longer be disregarded. The demand for the extension of the suffrage to women is daily growing more earnest and more general. The Bill lately before Parliament was this year supported by 609 petitions from every part of the kingdom, and signed by nearly 200,000 men and women. In the presence of such facts it cannot be said that there is no demand on the part of women for the suffrage. There is also this very strong argument, which is sometimes overlooked by those who consider that the suffrage should not be extended to women, because the majority of women do not desire to exercise their electoral rights. None of us who desire the extension of the franchise to women wish women to be compelled to vote. Only those who desire political power need exercise their newly-acquired rights. Any woman who thinks that voting would be unfeminine or injurious to her health, would be quite at liberty to refrain from taking part in elections. But it seems to me very unfair that those who don't wish for political power should be enabled to deprive those who do wish for it of the right to exercise the franchise. Let us now turn to the next objection, namely, that most women are Conservatives,

and that their enfranchisement would consequently have a reactionary influence on politics. I have often heard this argument from the lips of men for whom I have the greatest respect, but I never hear it without astonishment and regret. What is representative government if not government by a national assembly chosen by the people to represent their views, and to produce a corresponding influence on the state of the laws? Do those who object to the enfranchisement of women, on the ground that they are usually Conservatives, think that all Conservatives ought to be disfranchised? Surely representative institutions require that all differences of opinion should have their due and proportionate weight in the legislature. No class of persons should be excluded on account of their political opinions. What would be thought of a Conservative who gravely asserted that he thought all Dissenters should be disfranchised because they are generally Liberals? I am almost afraid even to suggest the hard names which such a misguided person would be called by the very people who oppose women's suffrage, because most women are Conservatives. And yet the two cases are exactly parallel, and equally antagonistic to the fundamental principle of representative government. A representative system which excludes half the community from representation surely is a farce. In my opinion the question ought not even to be asked, "How would women vote if they had the franchise?" The only question ought to be, "Is representative government the best form of government that can be devised?" If the answer is in the affirmative the exclusion of women from electoral rights can in no way be justified.

With some people it is a serious objection to women's suffrage that women cannot be soldiers, and would not therefore be liable to be drawn for the militia. It will at once be seen that this is no valid argument unless the profession of arms be made a *sine quâ non* for admission to the list of voters. But the suffrage does not rest on a military basis; and as long as being a householder and paying rates is the only qualification demanded of the male electors, I do not see how it can be reasonably urged that women householders must not have the suffrage because they are not soldiers.

The next objection which I have set down is that the indulgence and courtesy with which women are now treated by men would cease if women exercised all the rights and privileges of citizenship. As I hear this objection the old Bible story forcibly recurs to my mind, of Esau, and how he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Let it be granted that women would no longer be treated with exceptional courtesy and indulgence if they exercised the rights and privileges of citizenship. What do this exceptional courtesy and this indulgence really amount to? I am not going to say that they are valueless, but let us analyse them and see of what sort of things they consist. Women are usually assisted in and out of carriages; they also take precedence of men in entering and leaving a room; the door also is frequently opened for them; they are helped first at dinner; and they are always permitted to walk on the inside side of the pavement. Besides these there are more substantial privileges; such as being allowed to monopolise the seats in a room, or in a railway carriage, in those cases where, owing to over-

crowding, some of those present are compelled to stand. I hope I do not unduly underrate these little amenities of social life; they are very harmless and perhaps even pleasant in their way; but I think it must be confessed that their practical value is small indeed, especially if the price paid for them consists of all the rights and privileges of citizenship. If the courtesy of men to women is bought at this price, it must not be forgotten that the *sale* is compulsory, and can in no case be regarded as a free contract. But now let us consider whether women would really lose all the politeness now shown to them if their right to the franchise were recognised. At elections it is not usually the case that those who have votes are treated with the least consideration; but apart from this, how would the courtesy of every-day life be affected by an extension of the suffrage to women? I incline to the belief that some of the mere forms of politeness which have no practical value, such as always giving precedence to a woman in entering and leaving a room, would slowly but gradually fall into disuse if the electoral disabilities of women were removed; but I am quite convinced that true politeness, which is inseparably associated with kindness of heart, would not suffer any decrease from the extension of the suffrage to women. As far as my experience goes, those who are invested with political power of any kind are always treated with more deference and respect than those that are destitute of that valuable commodity. The highest political power in the kingdom is vested in a woman, and what man is inclined on that account to be less courteous to her, or less considerate of her

feelings? Have the women who have taken part in late municipal and school-board elections been treated more rudely since they acquired that instalment of political power? In answer to this objection to women's suffrage—that women would lose in the politeness with which they are now treated more than they would gain in political power—I reply in the first place that women are compelled to pay a great deal too dearly for this politeness, if they are forced to sacrifice for it all the rights and privileges of citizens. And secondly, there is no reason to suppose that the acquisition of political power would cause women to be treated with less courtesy and respect, though some of the mere forms of politeness might disappear, if the equality of the rights of men and women were recognised.

The next objection to the Women's Disabilities Bill is one which I have extracted from the speech of Mr Bouverie, who moved the rejection of the Bill in the House of Commons. He said this Bill, which would make Household Suffrage a reality by giving votes to those women who are householders, would "disturb the whole foundations of society, obliterate the distinction of sex and the functions of the sexes that have existed in every civilized community." When it is said that a certain proposed change would disturb the whole foundations of society, it is difficult to make any specific reply, because the phrase is so vague that it is almost impossible to discover its precise meaning. I think however it may be gathered from the context of Mr Bouverie's speech that by this expression he meant that the enfranchisement of women would lead to an alteration in the ideal of

family life; that the government of the family would assume a constitutional or even a republican form instead of remaining autocratic and despotic. I have already shown why I think a despotic government is always injurious whether it is found in a family or in a nation; and it is one reason why I regard the extension of the suffrage as a question of such great national importance that I think it will strike a blow at the last stronghold of that great enemy of human progress —despotism. If therefore Mr Bouverie means that society is founded on the family and the family is founded on despotism, and that therefore women's suffrage would strike at the foundations of society because it would weaken despotism, I can understand the drift of his argument, and I would reply to him that so far as society is based on despotism we think that every reform which would tend to change that basis is in every respect to be desired. But I should take exception to the implication that society is based on despotism. All that is good in society is based on freedom, and this would be greatly strengthened by the removal of the political disabilities of women. But Mr Bouverie said something more than that Women's Suffrage would disturb the foundations of society; he added that "it would obliterate the distinction of sex, and the functions of the sexes which have always existed in every civilized community." I do not wonder that you should smile at such a monstrous assertion, "Obliterate the distinction of sex!" One is inclined to exclaim with Dominie Sampson, "Prodig-i-ous." If such absurdities as these are the strongest weapons of our opponents, we shall

not have to wait long for our enfranchisement. Do Mr Bouverie and the gentlemen who voted with him really believe that women may vote at municipal and school-board elections, may fill important parochial and educational offices, may actually succeed to the throne without serious mischief ensuing, but that the moment a woman's name is inscribed on the register of voters the distinction of sex is obliterated, or in other words she ceases to be a woman? I suppose then that a woman is a woman only by virtue of Act of Parliament. One has sometimes heard discussions as to the limit and extent of the powers exercised by the Legislature; but the warmest advocate of the unlimited authority of Government has never yet openly declared that a woman is a woman only in virtue of the fostering care and protection of Parliament, and that if the Legislature chose it could as easily transform a woman into some other kind of animal as Cinderella's fairy god-mother transformed a rat into a coachman. I expect that even Mr Bouverie will live to acknowledge that it is not so easy a thing as he once—in the warmth of his oratory—imagined to "obliterate the distinction of sex," and that certainly the transformation cannot be effected by an Act of Parliament. The next objection that I have set down is that there is no authority in the Bible for women's suffrage. It must be confessed there is not. Neither is there any authority for the abolition of the purchase system, nor for household suffrage, nor, as it may interest Mr Bouverie to remember, for government by the great Whig families. Indeed I have never been able to discover, in the Bible any distinct reference to any of the familiar

topics of modern politics. I am aware that isolated texts may be quoted which seem to support the theory of the subjection of women, and I am also aware that advocates of slavery and polygamy quote in support of their views passages of Scripture. The question appears to me to be, "Are we prepared to ignore all the necessities of modern life, and to have no political ideas except those that are expressly sanctioned by the Bible?" Unless we are prepared to do this it is surely no argument at all to say there is no Biblical authority for women's suffrage. But even if it were granted that we should be guided in political matters by what we find in the Bible, much could be said to prove that the general spirit of the New Testament and especially of the teaching of Christ inculcates the doctrine of the equality of the entire human race. Without quoting such texts as "Call no man master," it will recur to everyone that the ideal of the New Testament is a region where there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free.

The next objection urged against the enfranchisement of women, is one which I am not perhaps wrong in saying is the one which has had the most powerful influence in producing the opposition to women's suffrage. Consciously, or unconsciously, most of us are greatly under the dominion of our feelings, even when they are directly opposed to the dictates of our reason. But let it not be forgotten that reason must be listened to sooner or later, and the feelings must ultimately submit to be modified by the understanding. This objection which I believe to be so potent with most people who oppose women's suffrage is "that

the exercise of political power by women is repugnant to the feelings, and quite at variance with a due sense of propriety." In Turkey, a woman who walked out with her face uncovered, would be considered to have lost all sense of propriety—her conduct would be highly repugnant to the feelings of the community. In China, a woman who refused to pinch her feet to about a quarter of their natural size, would be looked upon as entirely destitute of female refinement. We censure these customs as ignorant, and the feelings on which they are based as quite devoid of the sanction of reason. It is therefore clear that it is not enough, in order to prove the undesirability of the enfranchisement of women, to say that it is repugnant to the feelings. It must be further inquired to what feelings women's suffrage is repugnant, and whether these feelings are "necessary and eternal," or "being the results of custom, they are changeable and evanescent." I think these feelings may be shown to belong to the latter class. In the first place a feeling that is necessary and eternal must be consistent, and the feeling of repugnance towards the exercise of political power by women is not consistent; for no one feels this repugnance towards the exercise of political power by Queen Victoria. In the second place it has been previously shown that the equal freedom of all is a necessary pre-requisite of the fulfilment of the Divine Will, and that the equal freedom of a part of the community is destroyed if it is deprived of political power. Now it seems to me in the highest degree blasphemous to assert that the Supreme Being has implanted in man

necessary and eternal feelings in opposition to His own will.

Again, the state of popular opinion as to what women may, or may not do, is constantly changing in the same country and even in the minds of the same individuals, and the feelings on this subject differ in different classes of the community; it is, therefore, quite impossible to say that these feelings are necessary and eternal. If they are not necessary and eternal they are the result of custom, changeable and evanescent, and are destined to be modified by advancing civilization. It may be that a great deal of the repugnance which undoubtedly exists against women taking part in politics arises from the disturbance and disorder which are too often the disgraceful characteristics of elections in this country. I should like to say a few words on this point. In the first place the adoption of the ballot and the abolition of nominations, which are almost certain to take place before the next dissolution, will, in all probability, cause elections to be conducted with perfect order and tranquillity. A distinguished statesman, whose name I could mention, lately told a friend of mine that his last objection to women's suffrage would be removed by the adoption of the ballot. In the second place I think the danger of women proceeding to polling-places under the present system is greatly exaggerated. As the result of my own experience I can testify that during the last election at Brighton, I was walking about from one polling-place to another, the whole of the day; the town was in a state of great excitement; the contest was very

severe, and party feeling ran high. I walked through an excited crowd just previous to the close of the poll, after having been assured that it was not safe for me to venture, and I never heard one word or saw one gesture which would have caused reasonable annoyance to the most sensitive and refined lady. But I can give another and perhaps more striking example from my own experience. During the general election of 1865, I went round to many of the polling-places in Westminster, accompanied only by a young girl. We met with no incident whatever which could have alarmed or annoyed anyone. My experience on this point has always been the same, and it is corroborated by the experience of all ladies with whom I am acquainted, who, like myself, have tested by personal experience whether it is either unpleasant or unsafe for a woman to go to a polling-place. Their unanimous testimony has been that there is nothing to deter a woman from recording her vote. I, for one, have too good an opinion of my countrymen, to believe that they would insult or annoy a well-conducted woman in the discharge of what she believed to be a public duty.

I now pass to the last objection, for by this time I am sure you must be getting weary of me. This objection, that the notion of women's suffrage is monstrous and absurd and deserves only to be treated as a joke, is one which is slowly dying a natural death. You still hear of it in remote country districts, but it has received its death-blow from the names of the many very eminent persons who are the warm advocates of women's suffrage. Perhaps I need only mention such names as those of Mr Mill, Canon

Kingsley, Mr Darwin, and Professor Maurice, to remind you that women's suffrage is advocated by men occupying the highest ranks in philosophy, science, and literature. Mr Mill and others have shown in their writings the grounds on which they base their support of the claims of women to representation. It is easy to laugh; but when the leading philosophical thinkers of the day use all their weight and influence, and employ their great genius in striving to produce a recognition of the rights of women, their arguments must be met with arguments; they will never be answered by a sneer. I think I have now made a reply to all the objections previously enumerated against women's suffrage. In doing so I have perhaps sufficiently indicated the grounds on which I advocate it. I have endeavoured to show that men's rights and women's rights must stand or fall together; their maintenance is necessary to the fulfilment of the Divine will—man's happiness. For if God wills man's happiness, and man's happiness depends on his freedom, then God wills man's freedom. "Equity knows no difference of sex. The law of equal freedom necessarily applies to the whole race—female as well as male. The same reasoning which establishes that law for men may be used with equal cogency on behalf of women." These are not my words, they are the words of a great philosopher, whose writings will probably mould the opinions of unborn generations. I refer to Mr Spencer, and as I have, perhaps, passed rather too briefly over the objections of those who urge that women's suffrage would destroy the harmony of home, I cannot do better than quote in

conclusion what he has said on the effect of the complete enfranchisement of women on domestic happiness. "Married life under this ultimate state of things will not be characterised by perpetual squabbles but by mutual concessions. Instead of a desire on the part of the husband to assert his claims to the uttermost, regardless of those of his wife, or on the part of the wife to do the like, there will be a watchful desire on both sides not to transgress. Neither will have to stand on the defensive, because each will be solicitous for the rights of the other. Not encroachment but self-sacrifice will be the ruling principle. The struggle will be, not which shall gain the mastery, but which shall give way. Committing a trespass will be the thing feared, and not the being trespassed against. And thus instead of domestic discord will come a higher harmony than any we yet know."

M. G. F.

XI.

WHY WOMEN REQUIRE THE FRANCHISE*.

It is not my intention on the present occasion to dwell at great length on the arguments showing the injustice and impolicy of excluding women from political power. Not that these arguments are wanting in force, but that the agitation preceding the passing of the Reform Bill must have rendered them perfectly familiar to the minds of all who were interested in that struggle. I should weary you if I took pains to prove that it is a principle of the British constitution that taxation and representation should go hand in hand. You do not need to be reminded that one class can never be "virtually represented" by another. Working men were not contented with the "virtual representation" which they obtained from the middle and upper classes. What need is there to repeat the truism that an unrepresented class is certain to suffer unjust and oppressive treatment from the hands of those who monopolize the business of making laws, and administering them? The law of settlement, the truck

* A Lecture delivered at the Colston Hall, Bristol, in March, 1871.

system, the law of master and servant, the long-maintained refusal to protect from fraud the funds of trades' unions, are some of the witnesses, in the past and present, of the sort of representation which labour gets from capital. A longer, a more serious bill of indictment can be brought by women against those who have deprived them of their natural right of self-protection by means of representation. Of the wrongs which women have suffered from their exclusion from political power, and the benefits they expect to derive from representation, I will speak to-night. But I will first advert very briefly to some of the objections made against women's enfranchisement, because they are of a peculiar type, and many of them being quite different to the objections which were made against the representation of working men, I shall not be going over such familiar ground as I was when speaking of taxation and representation and the other old stock arguments. You will observe that women have to contend against all the objections which were raised against an extension of the suffrage to working men, and others beside, which greatly add to the complication of the subject. For instance, women are told they are too ignorant, too impulsive, too imperfectly educated to use the suffrage with discretion; it is hinted that they will be more open to bribery than other electors; it is also said they are too numerous, and if they had the suffrage they would have everything their own way. Besides all these arguments, which we heard so often applied to working men, women are told in the same breath that they do have everything their own way now, and that they

cannot improve their position in any respect; that they are angels, too good and gentle and pure to be burdened with the coarse, rough work of politics. Their exclusion from the political arena is not to be considered as a disability, but as a privilege. A privilege—yes, such a privilege that the only other people who are permitted to share it are minors, lunatics, felons, and idiots. The constant reappearance of the most illogical and self-contradictory objections to women's suffrage shows that there are large numbers both of men and women who prefer that things should continue as they are, and that women should never aspire to power and independence. Whence do these objections spring? I believe it will generally be found, where it is possible to question the objectors, and discover the motive of their arguments, that on the part of men these objections have their foundation in a general impression that there is no room for improvement in the social condition of our country. On the part of women their indifference to their own freedom generally arises from an indolent content with their own individual lot. "I am very happy," said a lady once to me, "I don't want any rights." She was seated in a carriage, surrounded with every luxury that money could procure. As far as an outsider could judge of her life, she had not a care or a sorrow in the world. She recalled to my mind a picture which appeared in *Punch* at a time of great distress among the working classes, when a strike or a lock-out had led to starvation, and starvation to rioting. The picture represented a gentleman, reading an account of these riots in the *Times*. He

was seated in a conservatory filled with the choicest flowers and ferns. Everything about him indicated wealth and luxury. As he takes the cigar from his lips he exclaims, "What *can* these fellows want? Why can't everyone be as contented and happy as I am?" The moral of the picture is obvious. Self-indulgence and luxury too often deaden the nobler feelings of ambition and compassion. If men fall into the temptation to forget the sufferings and privations of others less happily situated than themselves, how much more excusable it is in a woman to be guilty of the same faults! Trained from her earliest infancy to believe that she has no interest in public affairs, and that her thoughts and occupations should be limited to the narrow circle of her own home, is it to be wondered at that a woman who has a happy home, an affectionate husband, and no pecuniary anxieties, should wrap herself up in a domestic selfishness, and should not care to inquire into the destitute, miserable, and helpless condition of hundreds and thousands of her fellow countrywomen? Apathy concerning the wants and hardships of others does not always show hardheartedness. Far from it. If these ladies, who so cheerfully affirm that they want no rights, could witness the sufferings of a mother who had been deprived of her children, or of a wife who had been beaten or robbed by her husband, they would, I am confident, be full of tender and helpful sympathy. But they do not see these things; they do not think of them, and often do not believe in them. Let me then try to show what the position of a woman is in this country, what her position has been made by the legislators of past times, and what measure

of relief has been doled out by the legislators of the present day.

I will commence with a subject which has lately engrossed a large share of public attention, education. This nation possesses celebrated universities. The whole country is also thickly studded with grammar schools and other educational appliances, the whole of which, with very few exceptions, are devoted entirely to the education of men and boys. A clever lad who works hard in a country grammar school is often sent on by means of exhibitions and scholarships to one of the universities. There, a great field for ambition is before him, and he frequently gains a most distinguished position. No such inducements to industry are held out to girls; indeed until the last few years higher education has been almost universally considered unnecessary for women. I suppose it was thought that any sort of education was good enough for the mothers of future generations, on the same principle that farmers about a quarter of a century ago used to save their worst corn for seed. By offering no inducements and no rewards for proficiency in the higher branches of education, a deteriorating influence is exercised on girls' schools, and the whole condition of female education, as shown in the report of the Schools Inquiry Commission, is most deplorable. But how, it may be urged, could this be remedied by giving women votes? I reply, that if women had their representatives in parliament, care would be taken in readjusting the funds and working of endowed schools that girls should get their fair share. If women had been represented I do not believe that it would have been possible that

such an injustice to girls should have been perpetrated as is committed now by the present distribution of the funds of the Blue Coat School. This foundation was originally intended for the maintenance and education of girls as well as boys. The wealth of the school is now enormous; its gross revenue being £56,000 a year. What benefit do the girls of this country derive from all this wealth? You will hardly believe me when I tell you that while Christ's Hospital maintains and gives to 1150 boys an education which fits them to proceed to the universities, all that is done for girls is to educate 18 as domestic servants. When the experiment has been fairly tried no one can say that girls are unfitted to receive and benefit by higher education. A college for women has lately been started at Hitchin, not far from Cambridge. After a year's study five young women, who had come up to this college without any previous special training, obtained leave from the council of the university of Cambridge and from the examiners to be examined in the university examination usually known as the Little-go. These ladies had the same subjects, the same papers and the same examiners, as the Cambridge undergraduates. They had also had the same duration of college training, though probably much less previous instruction. All the five ladies passed. Four in the 1st class and one in the 2nd. At the same examination and the same time 46 per cent. of the men were plucked. I do not state these facts to prove that the mental powers of women are superior to those of men. I have a great dislike to these disputations about superiority or inferiority, because they only darken and confuse

the subject. But these facts do show that there is nothing in the nature of things why women should not reap as much advantage from high education as men do; and that therefore the whole country suffers a loss from the funds and educational appliances of the endowed schools and the universities being devoted exclusively to men. Before quitting this branch of the subject I will mention that several members of the university of Cambridge have devised a plan by means of which, although they have of course no power to divert any of the funds of the university, women may derive some indirect benefit from the wealth of the colleges. The plan is this. Lecturers on various educational subjects are employed and well paid by the colleges; a considerable number of these lecturers have consented to give courses of lectures on their own subjects to women, for a much smaller remuneration than they could afford to receive, if they were not well paid for their college work. This system has hitherto proved quite successful. Two or three scholarships, subscribed by private individuals, have been started in connection with it, and several ladies from a distance have come to reside in Cambridge in order to attend the lectures*.

These efforts to supply the educational needs of women are most encouraging, but it must not be forgotten that it will be a long time before girls have anything like the same educational advantages as boys. While I am on the subject of education, I will mention, as an additional reason why women want the suffrage, that, though there are many women who wish to receive

* Further particulars respecting the Cambridge Lectures for Women have been given on a previous page.

a medical education, and though there are thousands of women who would greatly prefer to be attended by one of their own sex, and who even risk their lives rather than be attended by a man, there is in Great Britain no recognised medical degree or medical training which is not closed against women. Women who want to be doctors and not quacks, must go to Zürich or to Paris for their education and their degree. If women had votes this state of things would not be possible six months longer. I now turn to another reason why women require the suffrage. I mean the legal status of married women. This is a subject which I would specially commend to the serious consideration of women who are happily situated, and who, because their real status is infinitely superior to their legal status, do not trouble themselves with any thought about their rights, but think that everyone ought to be as cheerful and contented as they are. Such a wife lives in a state of virtual freedom and equality with her husband; she has almost unlimited control over her children: instead of being in a state of servitude, she is in a position not only of freedom, but of authority; I am thankful that there are thousands of such households; but it must be borne in mind that the domestic life of a family like this is quite at variance with the spirit of the law of this country. The law decrees that the status of a married woman shall be the same as the status of a criminal or a lunatic. She has in law no separate existence; she has no legal control over her children. After they are seven years of age, her husband can if he choose remove them entirely from her; she has no right even to be with them; after her hus-

band's death she is not the guardian of her children unless he, by will, expressly make her so. She has no right to her own property. According, therefore, to the present state of the law, a man may prevent his wife from exercising any control over her own children; he may separate her entirely from them; he may rob her of her own property and lavish it upon his mistress; he may do all this with the comfortable assurance that his conduct is in strict accordance with the law of a civilized and Christian country. Law, the apostle says, should be a shadow of good things to come; and should, moreover, be a terror to evildoers, and not to those who do good. The laws which relate to married women are a type of the most degrading and revolting oppression on the one side and servitude on the other. They are a direct encouragement to evildoers; indeed, the only thing that makes society even as good as it is, is that there are large numbers of men and women who habitually defy the law, and live in direct opposition both to its letter and to its spirit. Do not, however, be persuaded that these laws are so monstrous that there are no men mean enough to take advantage of them. You can hardly take up a newspaper without seeing some case of misery which can be traced to the position of serfdom in which the law of this country places married women. Let me beseech happy wives and mothers not to wrap themselves up in their own good fortune, and smile contentedly over their cheerful homes, and say, "We are quite happy, we want no rights." If you don't want rights because you have so many privileges, remember the fate of those among your country-women who are associated for life with men

base enough to avail themselves of the power which the law places so unreservedly in their hands. Can it be believed for a single moment that if women had had any share in the making and amending of laws, their legal status would have remained what it is? "No," it may be replied, "but then it can be improved without giving women votes. Only the other day a Bill was passed to amend the law respecting the property of married women. You, therefore, should be patient and wait in confidence that our legislators will soon set everything right without requiring that women should mix themselves up in political affairs." In the first place, I will explain what this Bill is which has emanated from the united wisdom of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It is due to the latter assembly to say that it originated the absurdities of the measure. Indeed, it may be said as a general rule that the House of Lords touches nothing that it does not adorn. This Bill then, for which we ought to be so grateful and which we ought to regard as an earnest of the best intentions on the part of Parliament, secures to married women not their property, in the general sense of the term, but that part of their property which consists of their own earnings; this, however, is rather too generous an interpretation of the Bill; it does not secure to married women the whole of their earnings, but only such as they may acquire after the passing of the Bill. A *prima donna*, for instance, who had earned her £5,000 during the opera season of 1870 would not if she were married have a legal right to the ownership of a farthing of that sum.

I have not yet exhausted the absurdities of this most absurd measure. The following extract from a letter to the *Daily News* ought to be instructive to those who think we ought to be satisfied with such redress as Parliament is likely to afford us:—

Daily News, Jan. 16, 1871.

THE MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY NEWS."

SIR,—Last session an Act was passed called the Married Women's Property Act, 1870. It was intended to prevent the personal property of a woman, her wages and earnings, being at the absolute mercy and control of her husband and of her husband's creditors. It was supposed that it would be an especial protection to that poorer class of women whose property before marriage was too small to be worth the expense and life-long trouble of marriage-settlements. By the 11th section of the Act, "a married woman may maintain an action in her own name for the receiving of any wages, earnings, money, and property, by this Act declared to be her separate property, or of any property belonging to her before marriage, and which her husband shall, by writing under his hand, have agreed with her shall belong to her after marriage as her separate property." From this clause it will be seen that the consent in writing of the husband is necessary before the wife can exercise a separate ownership over her earnings and property.

A few days ago a servant who was possessed of a small sum of money, and who expected to receive a

further sum out of a fund of unascertained amount left by her late master for division, was about to be married. I advised her to take her husband's agreement in writing, under the 11th section, that the money should belong to her after marriage as her separate property. This was done. I then applied to the Solicitor to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to know whether this agreement required any and what stamp. He decided that it must bear an *ad valorem* stamp duty, as though it were an ordinary deed of settlement on marriage, and that evidence must be given of the value of the wife's interest under the will. I appealed to the Commissioners, who have upheld their solicitor's decision.

For all practical purposes then it appears that this Act may join the other "murdered innocents." The women supposed to be protected by the Act are not in the habit of taking agreements in writing from their husbands, nor are they in the habit of reading Acts of Parliament, or of consulting solicitors. Their agreements would be void for want of the stamp, and they would go away, wondering that Parliament should have taken so much trouble to so little purpose. Let this letter be a warning to those who are relying on the Act for protection.

Your obedient servant,

J. G. M.

As the Act now stands a poor sempstress might with impunity invest her earnings in a sewing machine; but if she had the good fortune to have a sewing machine given to her, she would have no legal ownership in it, and could claim no remedy and no redress

if her husband sold it and spent the money in his own indulgences. Any property, other than earnings, which a married woman may acquire the law still hands over to the husband. There is however an exception; one must not be unjust. Any woman, married after the passing of the Act, who should during her marriage become entitled to any personal property as next of kin, or under any deed or will, such property shall, *provided it does not exceed* £200, belong to the woman for her separate use. Our legislators can recognise the justice of the claims of women to their own property provided it do not exceed £200. What a fine sense of discrimination the limit shows! What is justice at £200 ceases to be justice at £201. I suppose the principle of this provision is that justice is a very fine thing in its way, a first-rate thing to talk about, and if you can get all the credit of it for £200, it is folly to sacrifice a larger sum. So far from this Married Women's Property Act convincing women that they will obtain all the reforms they need without representation, nothing that has occurred lately is in my opinion such a striking instance of the kind of remedy which the wrongs of an unrepresented class can command. A more incomplete and illogical measure than the Married Women's Property Act 1870 can scarcely be conceived. It has justly been termed a compromise which sacrifices everything. But we must accept it and be thankful it is no worse.

I have now mentioned several instances of the unjust and oppressive treatment which women suffer in consequence of the state of the law which refuses to recognise the independent and separate existence of

wives as responsible human beings. But we must not overlook the fact that the wrong produced by this state of the law is not suffered by women only: the safety of the whole community is imperilled by it; life and property are rendered less secure in order to maintain it. We all remember reading in the newspapers some little time ago the account of a remarkable trial known as the Torpey case. In the course of the trial a criminal was acquitted, not on the plea that she did not commit the crimes with which she was charged, but on the presumption that a wife cannot act independently of the control and authority of her husband. "Mrs Torpey's counsel made no effort whatever to refute the evidence of the prosecution. It was proved that she had taken an active part in the preparation and execution of the robbery." She has since asserted that she was the first to suggest the crime. "She and her husband had come to London and taken a house in a good neighbourhood. They gave a reference to alleged friends at Bath, and the letter in reply to the agent's inquiries was proved to be in the handwriting of Mrs Torpey. On the night of the robbery it was Mrs Torpey who sent the maid-servant on a false errand that she might be out of the way. It was Mrs Torpey who went out of the room and came back with a handkerchief saturated with chloroform which she dexterously applied to the shopman's nostrils. It was she who was found dealing with the spoil*." All these facts were admitted by the defence, and yet this criminal is let loose on society, where she may in the

* *Times* article on the Torpey trial. March, 1871.

future feel herself quite free to pursue her felonious career, in the assurance that as a married woman the law of this country acts on the presumption that she is not a free agent. In order to maintain the undisputed authority of the husband, crimes like Mrs Torpey's are allowed to go unpunished. It has been well said that the first article of the stock in trade of the female thief must henceforth be a husband. Under the shadow of his authority she may hoodwink justice and commit the foulest crimes with impunity. I know it has been said that the verdict of the jury was given against the law and against the ruling of the judge—that the baby had more to do with Mrs Torpey's acquittal than the husband. But it must not be forgotten that the jury in order to give a strictly legal verdict were bound to presume that Mrs Torpey had acted under the authority of her husband, and all they had to consider was whether there was sufficient evidence to rebut this presumption. Their verdict was only the full carrying out of the principle of the entire dependence of the wife on the husband, which the House of Lords, by its conduct in respect to the Married Women's Property Bill, maintains against the opinion of all enlightened jurists, and against the express wish of the House of Commons and the country. The acquittal of Mrs Torpey is not a solitary instance of the miscarriage of justice in consequence of the legal position of married women. If time permitted I could mention even more striking cases.

There are now very few persons who have taken any pains to inquire into the subject who do not feel that the legal status of women is typical of a barbarous

age, and ought to be changed; but the majority of these individuals appear to think that it will be much better if all the necessary reforms can be accomplished without giving women votes. They do not see that the necessity of these reforms is produced by the fact that women are unrepresented. Those who think that by altering this or that unjust law, or by removing this or that oppressive enactment, all will be made right, and there will be no fear of future disasters, may be compared to a housewife whose attention is called to the damage done by a leaking pipe. She observes with consternation a pool of water on the ground, and the sodden appearance of all the surrounding furniture. She busies herself with mops and cloths to wipe up the water, and with fires and irons and warming-pans to dry the furniture. But her labour is in vain, for she has neglected the very first thing that she ought to have done, and that is to stop the leakage in the pipe. If a commission were appointed, with the power and the will to place all women before the law on a position of perfect equality with men, and if in consequence every injustice and inequality which women now suffer were removed, all this ought not to satisfy us without the franchise. Until women obtain the power of self-protection which the franchise affords, they will never have any security that their wants and interests will not be overlooked or ignored by our legislators in the future as they have been in the past. Admission to the franchise would attack the root of the evil; all other remedial measures operate merely on the symptoms, and not on the cause, of the disease. If women were satisfied with the removal of their griev-

ances, without demanding the additional security of representation, they would deserve to pay the penalty invariably exacted from those who disregard the lessons of past experience, and with a blind and credulous folly neglect the precautions which the most ordinary prudence would dictate. Suppose a shop-keeper discovered that his assistant had been helping himself from the cash-box, and that on being found out and obliged to make restitution, the dishonest apprentice exclaimed with wounded pride, "It is most unreasonable of you to want to lock up the cash-box, or take it into your own safe keeping, still more unreasonable to speak of taking any measures against me. Have I not restored your money? what more can you want? It shows a mean and narrow-minded spirit in you, not to trust the future to my generosity." If his employer were taken in by a speech of this sort, if he trusted his apprentice again with the key of the cash-box, and thus put temptations in his way which he had previously shown himself unable to resist, what would the neighbours say if the shop-keeper were again robbed by his apprentice? Would not the jury of common sense decide that his weakness and folly had met with their just reward? Those who advise women to be satisfied with the removal of their grievances, and to take no precautions for their future security, want them to act in a way very similar to that of this foolish shop-keeper. For generations the exclusive right of making laws and choosing the law-makers has been restricted to the masculine members of certain sections of the community. The unrepresented classes have one and all, women and workmen, found that their rights and

wishes were overlooked, and their liberties forfeited, under this legislative system, which forced them to look to others for protection, and deprived them of the power to help themselves. The injustice of the plan was found unbearable by men, who, though excluded by their poverty from representation, could always look forward to improving their position and acquiring, if they cared for it, the necessary qualification which would give them a vote. But a woman can look forward to no change of circumstances which will make her an elector. Being for ever excluded from any chance of representation, her wants, interests and rights have been but dust in the legislative balance. Almost every law that is passed affects women as well as it does men, but because among women our legislators see neither actual nor possible electors, laws which affect both sexes are discussed solely in reference to their influence on the welfare and prosperity of men. Such a system can never work with any approximation to the principles of justice and equality. Under a system of government avowedly representative, the interests of an unrepresented class, a class, moreover, no member of which can under any possible combination of circumstances get represented, must be neglected. I will defy anyone throughout the history of representative institutions to point to an instance of the contrary. We ask for no exclusive privileges for women, we do not want any special franchise which would give women votes, but which would not under similar circumstances admit men to the suffrage. We urge no complaint in respect to the basis of the parliamentary suffrage; we only ask that let that basis

be what it may, the possession of property, of education, of moral integrity, or any other quality whatever, that women who fulfil the same conditions should be allowed to exercise the same right.

Property is still the basis of the Parliamentary suffrage, but a woman may be as rich as Crœsus without getting any nearer to the possession of the right of representation. A man is not deprived of his vote, as long as he is a householder and can pay his rates, for any mental or moral deficiency short of what would bring him within the walls of a prison or a lunatic asylum. But a woman may be as wise as Socrates, and as just as Aristides, and is still much more hopelessly cut off from representation than the most depraved male inmate of a criminal lunatic asylum. One cannot but wonder sometimes that such a state of things should be permitted to continue for another day in a country which prides itself on the justice of its institutions and the freedom of its inhabitants. The much-vaunted maxim of English jurisprudence, that in the eye of the law all who come before it are equal, can raise in the mind of one who remembers the position of women only a sentiment of well-deserved derision.

When in the House of Commons during the Reform agitation Mr Gladstone was urging upon the House the necessity and the justice of granting the suffrage to working men, he brought his arguments and his eloquence to a climax by exclaiming, "Are they not our own flesh and blood?" Would Mr Gladstone venture to deny that women are members of the human family? That is all the meaning in the assertion that working men are of our own flesh and blood.

Have not women a similar claim to kinship with the governing classes? They have an even greater claim. The lines which separate class from class are unhappily but too clearly defined; it needs a little imaginative power on the part of most members of Parliament to realise that working men are their own flesh and blood; but the case is different with women. The lives of men and women are in all classes and ranks intimately associated with each other. To say that women are of our own flesh and blood needs no stretch of the imagination; it is a literal fact. Therefore, the enfranchisement of women would have an effect which no one would be unconscious of; it would be felt in every home and in every family in the land. Hence the great opposition which women who claim the franchise have to overcome. In granting the suffrage to working men, our legislators knew that some people with whom individually they were unacquainted, and with whom they had no personal or private relations, would somewhere and in some manner exercise a right of which they had previously been deprived. So Parliament at last decided to let these people have possession of their rights, in the comfortable assurance that M.P.'s would have the credit of devotion to the cause of liberty, whilst at the same time their daily life and habits would be unaffected by the change. But with a woman the case is very different. Freedom and liberty are very fine things, but one likes to admire them, as one would a volcano, at a distance. It would be excessively disagreeable to introduce them into domestic life. At an Englishman's fireside they would be as much out of place as a "whale in a field of

clover." People generally regard with horror the application of the principles they advocate in public to personal and private concerns. If everyone who professes liberal principles would carry them into practice, not only at public meetings and on the hustings, but in all the relations of life, women would not have to wait long for their enfranchisement.

Since the time when I first determined to do what I could for the women's cause by lecturing on the political disabilities of women, the subject has taken an immense step in advance. Then I was chiefly occupied in replying to such arguments as that women would never take enough interest in public affairs to exercise the suffrage even if they had it; that women would never dare to go to a polling-place; that if they did so, it would be at considerable risk to themselves; that home was woman's sphere; and that she had no business or any pretext to have any other sphere. Two years ago all that could be said in reply to such arguments was that we *believed* there were many women who did care for public affairs, or who would care if they could exercise any influence over them; that we *thought* that if women had votes, they would brave the dangers of the polling-booth without any very serious results; and that we believed that after all the male electors weren't such utter savages as the opponents of women's suffrage would have us think. Lastly, in reply to the so-called argument that home was the only sphere for women, all we could say was, "wait till women are admitted to some share in public rights and public duties, and you will then see that home life is not a sphere, but a hemisphere, and that home duties and

public duties will each be better performed by uniting them instead of studiously keeping them apart." Now our position is very different. Since the passing of the Education Act and the election of the school-boards, we can say, not that we believe that women are fit to discharge public duties, but that we know it. In all places where a school-board has been elected women have taken part in the elections. No danger attended the very simple operation of recording their votes. No one can say that education is an unimportant matter, and that, though women were fit to choose members for such an insignificant thing as a school-board, they are unfit to vote for members of the Imperial Parliament. Education is one of the most important things that can engage the attention of any parliament. No one has heard of neglected homes or dirty children, because on a certain morning in November the women who had charge of them spent a quarter of an hour in walking to a polling-booth and recording their votes. But we have a more conclusive proof than any yet mentioned that women are fitted to take part in public affairs. Not only, at the school-board elections, were there women voters, but there were also women candidates. London, Manchester, Brighton, Bath, Exeter, Huddersfield, Oxford and other places have honourably distinguished themselves by returning women as members of their school-boards. I have taken pains to inquire into the circumstances of these elections. All the ladies returned, as well as the lady candidates who were not returned, showed the most marked aptitude for the discharge of their duties. In several places where women were returned, they were distinctly the best

candidates in the field. They always spoke tersely and to the point; they were always ready to answer questions and to give clear and intelligible explanations of their views to the electors. In three places, Marylebone, Brighton and Oxford, the electors showed their sense of the excellence of their lady candidates by returning them at the head of the poll. In all places in which there were women candidates the women electors supported them in large numbers. In some places the candidate owed her return entirely to the exertions of ladies, who not only voted, but gave up a large amount of time and trouble, previous to the election, in canvassing and circulating information among the electors. Many novelists delight in pourtraying jealousy of each other as the most marked characteristic of women. I hope those writers will take note of the result of the school-board elections; the way in which the women electors voted for the women candidates should teach them a useful lesson. When women show devotion to each other, and unity and combined action, be certain that the hour of their deliverance is near at hand. The extermination of petty jealousies and rivalries is a good earnest of the benefits to be expected from the acceptance by women of public rights and public duties.

There is one class of objectors to women's suffrage who say that it would destroy the harmony of the home, and would cause women to cease to be womanly. Let us look a little closer into this first objection—"women's suffrage would destroy the harmony of the home." All probably would agree that thought should be free and that a woman has as good a right as a man

to think about any subject whether private or political. Is the harmony of the home marred by the fact that a woman who is a member of that home is thoughtful, and able to converse and discuss with her husband or her father subjects of interest not only to themselves but to people in general? No; such a home possesses the only kind of harmony worth having; the harmony which depends on one note of the chord being dumb is not harmony at all. Agreement between two people which is produced by one of them not having any opinions is not agreement; it is mental stagnation on one if not on both their parts. If women had votes, it would no doubt induce a larger number of them to take an interest in public affairs, to the immense advantage of themselves and the men with whom they associate: no harmony which is worth the name would be in the least injured by it. What would anyone think if a friend of his came to him and said, "We are such excellent friends, and the harmony of friendship is so dear to me, that in case it might be endangered by any difference of opinion between us, I beg that you will never give your serious attention to any matter of more than private interest. I will think over all more weighty affairs and then you can take your opinion from me"? How would you describe the harmony of such a friendship? And yet this is what is demanded by people who argue that the extension of the suffrage to women would destroy the harmony of the home. For it must be remembered that a vote is merely the expression of an opinion, and that therefore those who object to women having votes are also bound to object to their having opinions. At this

point in the argument the objector to women's suffrage usually performs a strategical movement known as "changing front," and says, "Of course no one objects to women having opinions and cultivating their understandings, but to form opinions and to discuss them in the quietude of home is a very different thing to expressing an opinion by marching up to a polling-booth through the midst of a riotous, excited, drunken mob. If women had votes they would lose all refinement and delicacy, they would in fact cease to be women." Most of us have heard of the American story of the way in which General Butler stopped the yellow fever in New Orleans. He went down to the town with a considerable military force and caused posters to be put up in all the public places with these words in letters a foot high, "There shall be no more yellow fever in New Orleans." I suppose the people who believe that an Act of Parliament conferring votes upon women householders would change them into some other kind of creatures must place implicit faith in this story. But speaking more seriously, how can a reasonable being for one moment believe that any act which is not shameful and disgraceful in itself can deprive a woman of her womanliness? Women have stood on the battle-field with blood and carnage on every side of them, and the air heavy with the groans of the dying. Have they been the less true to womanhood and to humanity because they have cast aside the fear of danger to themselves and endured sickening sights and sounds for the sake of relieving the sufferings of others? Shakespear makes many of his heroines do things which would be considered very strange in

these days; in one of his plays he speaks of a woman being unsexed. Who is it? Not Portia who donned the doctor's robe and pleaded as an advocate in a court of law. Not the quick-witted Beatrice who longed to be a man to revenge the wrong done to her cousin. Not Helena, the physician. None of these, but Lady Macbeth, the perpetrator for the sake of ambition of the most revolting crimes. She was unsexed by actions which would transform anyone—man or woman—who committed them into a fiend. No one who is in the least conscious of the fitness of words would speak of a woman being unsexed by entering a polling-booth, the word is applicable only to express the moral degradation which succeeds the perpetration of crime. No act which is in itself innocent can deprive a woman of her womanhood.

There are many who regard with dread all changes which increase the independence of women. Such persons look upon all these changes as attempts to reverse the natural order of society; their favourite figure in speaking of the relations between men and women is the stately oak clasped by the graceful ivy which it supports, forming a whole in which strength and beauty are equally conspicuous. (I think I have the phrase correctly.) But surely the metaphor implies too much, and when contrasted with the facts which one sees in every-day life, it becomes quite ludicrously incongruous. Putting aside for a moment any consideration of the proportion of women who possess the mental characteristics that would fit them to play the part of the graceful ivy, how many men, think you, are there who are fitted to sustain the character of the stately oak?

An author of the last century, writing on this subject, says, "But, alas! husbands, as well as their helpmates, are often only over-grown children, and if the blind lead the blind, one need not come from heaven to tell us the consequence." It is surely mischievous to attempt to enforce upon all men and women *rôles* that very few are fitted to sustain. The assumption that all men are gifted with so much strength, judgment, and generosity that they are one and all fitted to wield sole authority over women, and to become the sole suppliers of their wants and the sole directors of their minds, does not rest on a sound basis of reason and truth; neither will reason and truth be discovered at the foundation of the other assumption, that no women are fitted for independence of thought and action. The belief that any class is best protected by being left entirely to the guardianship of another class has exploded, and has given place to the belief that no class is safe from aggression from the hands of others except in proportion as they are capable of being and are self-protecting. The laws relating to women are a striking example of the truth of this latter belief. A profound observer of mankind has remarked that "there is a deal of human nature in man," and until human nature has changed so fundamentally as to banish motives of self-interest from the dominion they have hitherto enjoyed, it is surely unsafe to leave the interests and the destinies of one section of the community entirely at the mercy of another. I do not say that the interests of these two sections are opposed when viewed in their true and their wide aspect; but then it seems to me that there is no way

of obtaining this comprehensive view except by combining the experience of all who are concerned. One man has one aspect of the truth presented to him; another man, in different circumstances, has another impression of the truth. It is by comparing these various impressions that the real state of the facts is arrived at.

It is, for example, asserted, and I believe with truth, that the real interests of labour and capital are identical; and yet it is notorious that the point of view of the capitalist is frequently the direct opposite of the point of view of the labourer. Any one anxious to obtain a true impression of the state of the case, any legislator attempting to frame a law for the purpose of readjusting the relations between employers and employed, will be careful to ascertain the opinions and the alleged grievances on both sides. There are many members of Parliament who are ready to represent in their own persons the point of view of the capitalist in all questions touching the interests of capital and labour; and there are also not a few who are sent to the House of Commons by the votes of working men, and who consequently endeavour to present on all these questions the point of view of the labourer. But when questions affecting women are discussed—and I would here remind you that there are very few legislative questions that do not affect women—there is not one member of Parliament who is able to speak with authority as a representative of the point of view from which the subject is regarded by women. It is needless for me to expatiate on the result. To some of the laws relating to women and

girls I have already referred; there are others, some of long standing and some of recent enactment, which are so revolting that it would be impossible to mention them here. I do not attribute to the framers of these laws wicked motives and evil passions. I believe that the English Parliament has been and is composed of men certainly not worse than the times they lived in; it has been composed of English gentlemen who, as a general rule, have endeavoured to practise the English virtues of fairness and common sense. I would acquit them entirely from the imputation that in framing the laws of this country they were actuated by any dislike for or prejudice against women. They were and are "men with sisters dear, men with mothers and wives." If the interests of one class could, under any circumstances, be safely entrusted to another, it might be imagined that the interests of sisters, mothers, and wives would be safe in the hands of legislators composed of brothers, sons, and husbands. And yet in no other set of laws is class legislation so apparent or so unblushingly partial as in the laws that refer to the relations between men and women*. It is often said that class legislation has produced one law for the rich and another for the poor; I am sure it may with even greater truth be urged that a similar cause has produced one law for men and another for women.

The promoters of women's suffrage are sometimes told by over-sanguine friends that the day is not far distant when the claims of women to representation

* If evidence of this assertion is required, the reader is requested to study the divorce act, and the laws relating to seduction and desertion. The laws respecting the property of married women have been referred to at length on a previous page.

will be granted. I should be very glad if I were able to share this opinion; but I am not the least discouraged by the prospect of the necessity of prolonging this agitation over many years. Every day brings new force into the movement; every day more women are discovering that the suffrage is the only means of cleansing the statute-book of the laws that are oppressive to their sex. It is sometimes said that women know nothing and care nothing about politics; this agitation is furnishing them with a political education. If we are too sanguine about the immediate future, we shall be apt to be discouraged if success does not come as soon as we expected. But whether it come soon or late—whether the next few years will see the successful issue of this agitation, or whether we have to continue it to the end of our lives, and then bequeath it to our children, we will endure to the end, and never rest satisfied with less than victory. Our purpose is not one

> "Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove:
> O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
> That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
> It is the star to every wandering bark,
> Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken."

We shall never lose faith in that ever-fixed mark, or believe that our star has fallen from the sky because it is sometimes hidden by clouds. Our progress during the last four years has not only been steady, but rapid; and the future is full of promise, although our journey's end may not be so near as some of us are apt to imagine.

M. G. F.

XII.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS*.

It can scarcely be doubted by any who have observed the events of the past session, that the question of the House of Lords is one which will soon assume a prominent position in English politics. Nothing can be more anomalous and more unsatisfactory than the relations between the two Houses. A Liberal majority in the Commons is always liable to be neutralised by a Conservative majority in the Lords, and the wishes of the majority of those who are represented in the Commons may at any moment be set at nought by an irresponsible legislature, the greater part of whose members have inherited a right to exercise government over others, irrespective of merit or any other qualification. These are of course the every-day objections which are urged against the House of Lords by those who are considered extreme politicians. The subject, however, may be regarded from another point of view, which should make the strongest Conservative not less dissatisfied with the present state of things than the most advanced Radical. The House of Lords is a con-

* *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1871.

stant encouragement to violent political agitation. As measure after measure is rejected by the Peers, the people are virtually told by the Peers themselves, "We object to this measure, and we cannot pass it, until our resistance has produced a strong popular feeling of resentment, and then we will vote against our conscientious convictions rather than be responsible for a revolution." The most powerful inducements are thus offered to the people to make threatening proposals and to urge violent demands.

But there is another way in which the House of Lords acts most prejudicially upon the highest interests of true Conservatism. No one can doubt that some of the ablest Conservative politicians are to be found in the House of Lords. In order to prove this, it is only necessary to enumerate such names as those of Lords Derby, Salisbury, Cairns, and Carnarvon. There are few persons possessed of a semblance of political power who are placed in so unfortunate a position as a Conservative member of the House of Commons who has great capacity and a strong will, and who inherits a peerage. Before Lord Cranborne became Lord Salisbury, he was one of the most influential men in the kingdom. He had a full opportunity for the exercise of his intellectual powers. If he triumphed, it was in the fair field of open political conflict, where all could contend according to their deserts, and where the people could select whom they pleased to champion their cause. The country, therefore, could not object to any success he might obtain. But Lord Cranborne becomes Lord Salisbury. Whether he wishes it or not, he has absolutely no choice in the matter, he is

relegated to another chamber, and he at once finds his political life is surrounded by numberless fetters. If he votes according to his convictions, he is told that he is headstrong and unreasonable, and that if he does not smother his conscience he will precipitate a revolution, and cause the abolition of the Chamber to which he belongs. It is by no means an improbable supposition that many Peers recognise the alternative just stated, and that this suggests an explanation of some of their recent acts. They may justly say, "It is far better that we should hasten this revolutionary crisis with which we are threatened. If the House of Lords were abolished, we could return to the Commons. There we should exercise far greater influence, we should have a far better field for our energy, and we should at least be spared the humiliation of being constantly obliged to refrain from opposing measures we disapprove." The Conservative party in the House of Commons, recruited by these new allies, would soon occupy an entirely new position. What might not its fortunes have been during the recent session, if the avowed discontent of many members of the Opposition with their leaders had not protected the Ministry from the just and natural consequence of their errors and misfortunes? If, therefore, the subject is simply considered from a narrow party point of view, the abolition of the House of Lords may not prove so anti-Conservative a measure as is usually supposed. The question, when broadly discussed, involves considerations of infinitely greater moment than the comparatively trivial consequences of a temporary loss or gain to some particular party.

In order still further to substantiate the statement that the relations between the two Houses of Parliament are most unsatisfactory, and in order to show that it is of the greatest practical importance that something should immediately be done, it will be well briefly to recount some of the incidents that took place in the two Houses during the session of 1871. At its commencement the Government used all its influence to retain in the University Tests Bill one of the most indefensible and pernicious of all religious restrictions. No test can be more unjust or more mischievous than that which is involved in a clerical fellowship. There was an unanimous feeling amongst the Liberals in the country, and an almost unanimous feeling among the supporters of the Government in the House, that no clerical test should in future be imposed in the Universities. Mr. Gladstone, however, declared that, in order to conciliate the House of Lords, he would abandon the Bill, if any of the exclusively clerical appointments at Oxford and Cambridge were thrown open. These miserable remnants of ecclesiastical ascendancy were retained to irritate the people and to suggest topics for future agitation, because the Prime Minister thought that unless this deference were shown to the prejudice of the Peers, they would reject the Bill. Some people have hinted that in this particular case the deference was not unwillingly shown by him who proffered it. A few months elapse, and the attitude assumed by the same minister towards the Peers is fundamentally changed. It is not necessary to enter at length into a discussion of the Royal Warrant. It is sufficient to remark that the Peers refused to pass the second read-

ing of the Army Bill until they obtained further information with regard to the future administration of the army. Opinions, no doubt, differ as to the wisdom and justice of this conduct. It cannot, however, be denied, that whereas the rejection of the University Tests Bill was unanimously condemned by Liberals, the course the Lords adopted with regard to the Army Bill was certainly approved by many whose fidelity to Liberalism cannot be doubted. Some of the strongest opponents of the purchase system sympathised with the opinion that, bad as purchase is, the introduction of political patronage into the army would be a far greater evil. The Peers, therefore, might be fairly thought to have had reasonable grounds for their opposition to the Army Bill, when it is remembered that the Government persistently refused to give any assurance that if purchase were abolished, political patronage would not be set up in its place. The Prime Minister, however, previously so deferential, at once assumed the character of a dictator, resorted to a *coup d'état*, and defeated the independence of the Peers by an exercise of royal prerogative. It therefore appears that the relations between the two Houses are such as in one session to bring upon the country two evils, diametrically opposed in character to each other. In the one instance the usefulness of a great measure was diminished, and in the other instance a precedent was set which, if repeated, would prove fatal to Parliamentary independence, and which would enable a minister with a majority at his back to deprive a minority of one of their most valuable weapons of defence.

The resort to the Royal Warrant was in the first

instance popular with Radicals, but subsequent reflection has probably shown them that they were sanctioning a method of procedure which might some day be used with disastrous effect against themselves. They can scarcely fail to perceive that they were endorsing the principle that a minister, supported by a majority, would be at any time justified in defeating a minority by an appeal to prerogative. A Tory Prime Minister may be some day supported by a majority, and he would be thus, as it were, authorised to follow in the path marked out for him by a Liberal minister. Again, it should be remembered that each day it is becoming more clearly proved that there is a far greater difference between Radicals and Whigs than between Whigs and Conservatives. A permanent alliance between extreme and moderate Liberals involves a much greater sacrifice of principle than an union between moderate Liberals and Conservatives. At any time, therefore, it may happen that Radicals, in a comparatively small minority, may find that they have to contend against a powerful majority composed of Whigs and Conservatives. This being the case, Radicals have perhaps the most to fear from an appeal to prerogative. One of the greatest advantages resulting from Parliamentary institutions arises from the power which Parliamentary forms give to a minority to assert their just influence. It should never be forgotten that even if our representative system were much less imperfect than it is, a Parliamentary majority cannot be fairly assumed except on a few questions to represent the majority of the nation. At each general election two or three questions are prominently before the country.

The election is decided upon these questions. A few months after the new Parliament is assembled, it always happens that many subjects are brought forward upon which the constituencies have never been consulted. On any one of these questions there may consequently be the widest divergence between the people and their representatives. Parliamentary forms consequently become of particular value, because they afford an opportunity of this divergence being expressed. When a Bill has to be read a first, second, and third time, a minority who think that they represent a predominance of opinion in the country have an opportunity whilst the measure is passing through its various stages to appeal to the public and to make their influence felt. When Mr. Lowe's ill-starred match-tax was first discussed, it was supported by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons. It was, however, condemned in the country with even greater cordiality than it had been approved in Parliament, and in a few days the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to bow to public opinion, and the tax was abandoned. Prerogative, however, dispenses with all these Parliamentary checks and safeguards. It is sometimes supposed that there are not many subjects to which the exercise of prerogative would be applicable. Those who argue in this way must overlook the fact that charters to colleges may be granted by royal prerogative. Parliament was never consulted upon the grant of a supplemental charter to the Queen's University in Ireland, and if it had not been for a lucky accident the charter would have been confirmed, and mixed education in Ireland would have received

a blow from which it could scarcely have recovered. The Crown Lands, and the Crown rights over such open spaces as Epping Forest, may be disposed of by an exercise of prerogative; and this danger can scarcely be regarded as imaginary after the doctrines so persistently asserted by the present Government that these Crown Lands are absolutely the private property of the sovereign, and that royal forbearance is the only security we have that the London parks will not be cut up and sold in building lots.

It should also be borne in mind that in order, as it were, to buy off the opposition of the Peers, scarcely a single measure passes the House of Commons without some compromise being introduced into it that greatly detracts from its usefulness and completeness. In the Irish Church Bill the reversion of the tithes was surrendered to Irish landlords; and this great sacrifice of national property was notoriously made with the object of getting the Bill through the Lords. A distinguished member of the Cabinet defended the proceeding on the plea that it was necessary to do something to "grease the wheels;" but the object for which the wheels were greased was so patent that the *Times*, in a very able leading article, said that the transaction would long be remembered as the "corrupt and corrupting portion of the Bill."

If the relations between the two Houses are as unsatisfactory as they are now generally admitted to be, the pertinent question at once suggests itself, Is there not a simple and complete remedy at hand? Why not abolish the House of Lords? It has been so much the custom to suppose that the abolition of the

House of Lords is one of the cardinal articles in a Radical's political creed, that it is generally assumed that all who claim to be Radicals should welcome such a movement, waiting patiently until it gathers sufficient strength to become irresistible. There are many considerations which render it peculiarly important that Radical politicians should clearly define the policy on which they are embarking. Is the House of Lords to be abolished, and nothing substituted in its place; or is it intended that a Second Chamber should be constituted on an entirely new basis? The answers to be given to these questions must mainly depend upon the answer given to a preliminary inquiry. If the system of representation upon which the House of Commons is elected is to remain unchanged—if, as we gradually tend towards universal suffrage, we are to have not a true but a false democracy—if we are to have the representation not of all, but simply the representation of the majority in each constituency—if this is to be the goal of our political future, then for one I should not be prepared simply to abolish the House of Lords, but I should desire to see a Second Chamber so constituted as to enable it to exercise increased influence. If, however, the principles of true democracy receive a general recognition—if some system of proportional representation were introduced which would afford the fullest opportunity for every section of opinion to be represented by the ablest and most independent men—if this were done, no Second Chamber would be required, for the House of Commons would become a true reflex of the nation, and would contain within itself those elements which a Second

Chamber might in a more imperfect way supply. So far as my own individual opinion is concerned, I do not hesitate to say that I should greatly prefer a reform in our representative system in the direction just indicated, so that a Second Chamber would be rendered unnecessary.

But returning to the main inquiry, the qualified approval which has been expressed in favour of the abolition of the House of Lords must not be supposed to indicate the slightest sympathy with the principle of hereditary legislation. It has long seemed to me that if there is any meaning in the word Liberalism, no one can fairly claim to be a Liberal who is prepared in any way to support the hereditary principle in legislation. Signs are not wanting that opposition to this principle will some day constitute the cardinal line of demarcation between the two great political parties. A Conservative has a *raison d'être* for his creed when he says, "The consequences of any change are uncertain. It is well to remain content with things as they are; it is better to 'bear the ills we have than to fly to others that we know not of.'" But a Liberal professes not to be satisfied with the present state of things; he is constantly looking out for changes and improvements. He should not hesitate to face the uncertain future, and therefore should desire to change any institution which cannot be defended on its merits. Can any principle be more opposed to justice, more contrary to common sense, than that certain men should be born to govern others, and that this right should be independent of capacity or fitness, should not be forfeited by the exhibition of ignorance and vice,

but should be simply contingent on the death of a father, a brother, or a cousin? Such a system would be far more generally condemned than it is, were it not supposed that the continuance of a Second Chamber is inseparably associated with the maintenance of the hereditary principle. Those, however, who desire to see a Second Chamber continued cannot too soon recognise the fact that, with the increased power conferred upon the people by an extended suffrage, they will not long submit to have measure after measure delayed or defeated by an assembly whose constitution deprives its decisions of popular respect. It frequently happens that some reform to which the people attribute great importance is set aside by the votes of those who never take the trouble to go near the House of Lords except when some ecclesiastical inequality or some class monopoly is to be maintained. If the Second Chamber were differently constituted, if it were composed of the true nobility of the nation, if its members embraced those who had ennobled themselves by some public service or by some high intellectual efforts, then the people would be sufficiently reasonable to respect its decisions, and to give to its authority the weight which would be its due. The people are discontented with the present state of things because they know that their wishes may be set at nought by men who have no claim to legislate for others, and who have never done a single act which entitles them to be placed in a position of influence and superiority. If such considerations as these are cast contemptuously aside, history will repeat itself, and that will be shown in the future which has so often taken place in the

past—that those who are chiefly responsible for a revolutionary crisis are not those who hold extreme opinions but those who blindly resist timely and necessary reforms.

Before, however, proceeding to explain the manner in which, in my opinion, a Second Chamber should be constituted, it may be desirable to indicate the reasons which induce me to think that such a Chamber ought not to be dispensed with unless the House of Commons is to be elected on entirely different principles. It is easy to show that the simple abolition of the House of Lords would leave many of the gravest defects in our present representative system untouched. Amongst these defects none should arrest more serious attention than that at the present time it is difficult for any man to engage in active political life unless he is prepared to accept a peerage, or unless he can squander thousands in a contested election, and is so constituted that he can readily accept the shibboleths of the political party which happens to be in the ascendant in the constituency which he seeks to represent. This is an evil which is certainly not diminished, but is rather aggravated by the electoral changes which have lately taken place. Household suffrage has certainly not rendered elections less expensive. It has been stated on authority that the amount of money spent at the last general election was unprecedentedly large, and few were returned who did not promise allegiance to one or other of the great political parties. What has recently occurred with regard to the Ballot Bill does not inspire confidence that a better state of things will be introduced by secret voting. The majority of the

members of the Government and the majority of those who now support the ballot in the House of Commons not long since opposed it. Displaying the zeal of recent converts, they worship the ballot as a kind of fetish, and are either indifferent or hostile to other far more important reforms. This is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that the proposal to render candidates no longer liable for the necessary expenses of elections was ejected from the Ballot Bill by a far larger majority than a similar proposition brought forward three years since. Without this important guarantee for the economical conduct of elections, it is only too certain that the ballot, by making a greater number of polling-places necessary, will increase the unavoidable expenses of candidature, and thus it will become far more difficult than ever for any but the wealthy to be returned to Parliament. But, besides the costliness of elections, there are other ways in which our present representative system excludes from political life many who are peculiarly fitted to render service to their country. It may be noticed that there is always some particular question which is supported with fanatical eagerness by a section more or less considerable in each constituency. Unless a candidate is "sound" on this question, its uncompromising supporters will not accept him, and he has little chance of being returned. In this way an influence is brought into operation which sometimes excludes men who value independence more than Parliamentary honours, and which sometimes offers a temptation which is destructive to political honesty. The attitude recently assumed by the Liberal party on the ballot affords a

striking example of what has just been stated. When it is remembered that only three or four years ago the ballot was supported by a small minority in the House of Commons; when it is remembered that the subject was never discussed except to be treated with contempt and ridicule; when it is known that not a single new argument has been discovered in its favour; and when it is also known that the very men who used to laugh at it, now say that it is a reform of vital importance—can any one suppose that all this newborn enthusiasm is genuine? If the truth were told, this sudden conversion is evidence so plain that those who run may read, that in every constituency there is a section so eager for the ballot that a Liberal cannot oppose it without risking his seat. Perhaps it will be said there is nothing wrong in this. If the people are determined to have the ballot, it is only right that they should pledge their representatives to vote for it. This, however, ignores the fact that those Liberals who happen to be opposed to the ballot are unrepresented. That Liberals throughout the country are by no means unanimously in favour of the ballot may be readily tested by any one who takes the trouble. It is notorious that great numbers, even among those who hold the most radical views, cordially endorse the objections raised by Mr Mill against secret voting, and yet throughout the long debates which have recently taken place there was not a single Liberal member who could venture to state these objections. Many other questions may be cited which suggest similar considerations. No one who is opposed by the priests has a chance of being returned for a Catholic constituency

in Ireland. The Irish priests belong to the most extreme Ultramontane party, and they consequently exact from every candidate a distinct pledge of hostility to united education. No one can have spent any time in Ireland without discovering that great numbers of the Catholic laity are as much in favour of united education as their priests are opposed to it. But those who sympathise with the priests are not only generally the most numerous, but are also the best organised party; the weaker are suppressed by the stronger, and the result is that every member who is returned for a Catholic constituency is pledged to support denominational education, and the representation of Ireland is the same as it would be if every Catholic was an Ultramontane. But probably the most striking instance of the manner in which our system of representation disfranchises great sections of opinion is afforded by the fact that the two million English and Scotch Catholics are unable to return a single member of their own religion to the House of Commons. Sir John Acton, if he had not been a Catholic, would have been regarded as a desirable candidate by the most enlightened Liberal constituency in the kingdom. Not being an Ultramontane, it was equally impossible for him to be returned for an Irish constituency; and, consequently, being, it may be presumed, anxious that English and Scotch Catholics should not be altogether unrepresented, he accepted a peerage. It is no doubt true that Sir John Acton was in the House of Commons for a short time, but as nomination boroughs are abolished, and as an extended suffrage gives a predominant popular feeling a better chance of asserting

itself, the difficulty of a man being returned, whose religion is distasteful to the mass of the people, naturally becomes greatly increased.

The examples just given prove that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, so entirely fails to be a truly national assembly, that important opinions are unrepresented, and considerable sections of the community are virtually disfranchised. It is also evident that such a system must offer the most serious discouragement to political independence and honesty. Many a conscience is sure to be subjected to a demoralising strain, when it is known that as a condition of entering Parliament some particular pledge must be swallowed. Those who will not submit to go through such a process include of course many of the best men in the country, and against them the door of the House of Commons is closed. Not long since, the following conversation took place within less than a hundred miles of Westminster Hall. An Irish member, whose seat was about to become vacant, went to a friend and asked whether he thought a very distinguished man—whom we will call A. B.—would like to become a candidate for the seat about to be vacated. The friend replied, "Is not the constituency Catholic? And will it not be necessary for a candidate to pledge himself in favour of denominational education? A. B. has always been one of the best known advocates of the opposite system, and there will be, therefore, some difficulty in his accepting this pledge." The member was incredulous that any one could raise so trivial an objection. "A safe seat thrown on one side, because of a trifle like saying you are in favour of denomina-

tional education when you are not!" After the expression of such incredulity the friend advised the member to visit A. B. He accordingly did so. He found A. B. deaf to all his entreaties and firm upon this question of principle; the member, when he returned from the interview, said, "Think of a man keeping himself out of Parliament on account of a trivial point like this. I never knew before how unpractical and absurd philosophy makes a man." Although thus baffled in his first search for a candidate, he had not far to go to find what he wanted, ready to his hand. A rejected candidate of an English Radical constituency, who had lately asseverated the utmost enthusiasm for undenominational education, was not deterred by any of the scruples which are supposed to make the philosopher so unpractical a person; he immediately gave the priests every promise they asked from him, and success rewarded the elasticity of his principles.

Enough has now probably been said with regard to the defects of our electoral system to indicate the reasons which induce me to think that, unless these defects are remedied, it would not be desirable to abolish the House of Lords without substituting something in its place. But the practical question now arises, "If it is necessary to continue a Second Chamber, how is it proposed to reconstruct it?" In Mr Mill's treatise on Representative Government there will be found a very elaborate scheme for the construction of such a Chamber or Senate. Mr Mill, however, thinks that, without a revolution, the House of Lords cannot be swept away; and, therefore, he contemplates that the new Second Chamber will not be so much a

new structure as the repairing and enlarging of the old edifice. He, consequently, assumes that the present peerage should be represented by the Peers themselves; in fact, that there should be English representative Peers in the same way that there are now Irish and Scotch representative Peers. He, however, proposes that the election should take place by some method of cumulative voting, so that all the representative Peers should not belong to the predominant party, as is now the case with the Scotch representative Peers. It seems to me, however, that it would be in every respect far more desirable that, in the proposed new Second Chamber, privileges associated with the hereditary principle should altogether cease. Those who object to the present House of Lords because they are opposed to its hereditary character, would act with inconsistency, and would compromise their principles, if they sanctioned the creation of a hereditary electoral college, to which none but Peers would be admitted, and the members of which would elect from their own body a considerable portion of the Second Chamber. Such an arrangement could not in any way be regarded as advantageous to the Peers themselves, for if their hereditary political privileges were abolished, restrictions against their entering the House of Commons ought, of course, simultaneously to cease. Considering the great social advantages possessed by the Peers, there is no doubt that if politically they were placed on the same footing with the rest of their countrymen, there is scarcely one amongst them, whose capacity is at all above the average, who could not either be returned to the House of Commons, or who would not be

able to obtain some position which would entitle him to a seat in the Second Chamber.

Reverting, however, to other parts of Mr. Mill's scheme, too much importance cannot be given to his suggestion, that men should be admitted to the Second Chamber, as far as possible, independently of party favour or political patronage. The discharge of some public duty, or the attainment of some recognised position in the State, should entitle a man to claim a senatorial position without rendering it in any way necessary for him to ask it as a boon. Among others who should be entitled to claim such a position might be mentioned the following: retired Judges, Indian and Colonial Governors, Cabinet Ministers, the leading permanent officials of State departments, and those who have exercised high commands in the army and navy. Recent experience shews that in order to obviate a possible abuse, it should be arranged that the discharge of the duties of each of these positions, for a certain number of years, should be a necessary qualification for a senatorial position. Many other modes of admission to the proposed Senate might be suggested. It has, for instance, been objected that from such an assembly all local magnates would be excluded. It would, however, be very easy to get over this difficulty. Few can believe that with a democratic suffrage the present mode of appointing County Magistrates will be long permitted to continue. The County Magistracy is the only non-elective body which is permitted to levy taxation and control expenditure. A demand for an elective magistracy, when once pressed, cannot be long resisted. If this reform

were carried out, an obvious way of introducing local magnates into the Second Chamber and of giving each county a distinct local representation therein, would be to permit the elected magistrates to nominate one or more of their number to the Second Chamber.

Although it is important that the Second Chamber should embrace among its members as many as possible of those who are distinguished for intellectual attainments, yet there is obviously a much greater difficulty in making a selection when it rests on the somewhat vague basis of intellectual distinction. It is also no doubt true that a man may be a very illustrious writer or artist, and yet be unacquainted with politics. Unless, moreover, what constitutes intellectual distinction is clearly defined, those to whom the power of selection would have to be entrusted might of course abuse it by diverting it to party purposes; and there would also be the widest divergence of opinion as to the individuals on whom the selection would justly fall. There are, however, certain recognised public positions which are seldom obtained by any who do not possess mental qualifications far above the average, and the attainment of any of these positions might confer a right to a seat in the Second Chamber; for instance, a person who has been President of the Royal Society, of the College of Physicians, or of the College of Surgeons; the Chancellors of the various universities, and the heads of any learned society which had been incorporated by Parliamentary Charter. A Second Chamber constructed on such a basis would contain among its members many who now rarely obtain admittance to either House of Parliament, but who are

eminently qualified by their knowledge, by their experience, or by their special training, to render the most valuable assistance to a legislative and administrative body.

It has been often pointed out that the members of an assembly chosen by popular election will naturally reflect popular feeling, and therefore will display not only the virtues, but also the faults of the public. Amongst these faults want of special training and special knowledge is prominent. If, therefore, there were two Chambers, care should be taken that the one should supply as far as possible the shortcomings of the other. It is easy to show that many men who could render most indispensable service to the State, and who would supply an element which is now often entirely wanting in Parliament, would be admitted to such a Chamber as is here described. This may be almost sufficiently proved by a reference to the manner in which the interests of India are now dealt with in Parliament. Secretaries of State for India are appointed by each successive administration who confessedly have no knowledge of India. The number of men in Parliament who have had the training of Indian statesmen, and who are therefore fully competent to deal with subjects vitally affecting our great dependency, may be almost counted on one hand. The consequence is that Parliament, having assumed the responsibility of watching over the affairs of India, has scandalously neglected a trust which must be regarded as probably the most sacred and the most important that was ever assumed by a representative assembly. Indian questions do not excite so much interest in the

House of Commons as a squabble about the cost of a road through St James's Park; and all this is taking place while the finances of India are getting into inextricable confusion, debt rapidly accumulating, expenditure steadily increasing, and taxation becoming so burdensome that far and wide the seeds of disaffection are sown. And yet, destitute as Parliament is of Indian statesmen, there are always living amongst us a great number of men condemned against their will to a life of political inactivity, who have administered the affairs of an Indian province, who have spent their lives among the Indian people, and whose special knowledge and peculiar training would be invaluable in Parliament. Amongst a great number of names which might be mentioned, it is only necessary to refer to Sir Donald McLeod, Sir Robert Montgomery, and Sir Bartle Frere. The last two are on the Indian Council—a body whose utility may be greatly questioned; but Sir D. McLeod has now, I believe, no public duties to discharge. He is not a man likely to be known by a popular constituency, and yet any one who is acquainted with what he has done in India, and who has read his official despatches, showing the justest and wisest appreciation of the wants of the Indian people, must feel that his presence in Parliament would be of inestimable value to our Indian administration. It is now to a great extent a matter of chance, whether various departments of knowledge have a single representative in Parliament. It may very probably happen that science may be altogether unrepresented. Again there is nothing which the country more requires than a thorough reform of our

law based upon a scientific code. Almost all the legal members of the House of Commons are practising barristers, who have neither time nor opportunity to engage in a comprehensive reform of the law. If a man has once been a judge he never attempts to enter the House of Commons, and the greatest lawyers and most scientific jurists may for various reasons be unwilling to accept a peerage.

Such a senate as is here contemplated would command popular respect; its members would be eminently qualified not only to initiate legislation, but also to amend many of the measures passed by the Lower House, which not unfrequently reflect the impulsiveness and uncertainty of purpose of popular feeling. Men of sagacity and wisdom would be too prudent to carry their resistance to the people's interest to an unreasonable length. They might reject a measure passed by the House of Commons on the ground that the country ought to have greater time for consideration, but such a rejection would produce very different feelings from those aroused now, when indignation is excited because the majority of those, who assume the responsibility of interposing their veto, have obtained their legislative authority from the accident of birth. It would only be fair that the voting of supplies should continue to rest entirely with the House of Commons, and that those only should be permitted to raise taxes and to expend public money who obtain their power direct from the people.

In order to prevent all chance of being misunderstood, I am anxious to repeat that I only advocate a Second Chamber as an alternative. It would, in my

opinion, be far more desirable to have but one House, if it were elected on a plan that would make it a truly national assembly, in which every class and section of opinion would be fairly and proportionately represented. The events of the next few years will prove whether there is any reasonable prospect of such a representative reform. The question of the redistribution of seats will soon have to be considered. It is impossible that the present glaring anomalies and inequalities in the distribution of political power can continue. In one place a member was returned who only polled sixty-nine votes, and in another place 11,600 electors who voted for a particular candidate remain unrepresented. Unless the public regard the subject from a point of view very different from that in which they have been accustomed to consider it, there is too much reason to fear that a demand will be made for equal electoral districts, with one member allotted to each. This plan prevails in America, and the experience which can be obtained from that country throws an instructive light upon the results of the system. The worst forms of electioneering management and chicanery would be employed to manipulate the electoral districts; and none but the predominant majority in each constituency would be represented*. Perhaps, however, a better state of things may be anticipated, and it may come to pass that as the suffrage is rendered more democratic, the true principles of democracy may receive more general recognition, and those who claim

* See a subsequent essay in this volume, entitled "An American on Representation."

to be democratic in their sympathies will see that they are bound, consistently with the creed they profess, to strive after an electoral system by means of which the whole community might be represented. If this were done, all the advantages which have been attributed to a reconstructed Second Chamber would be secured more simply and more effectually, and the Constitution would work far more harmoniously. The men whom it is contemplated to admit to the Second Chamber, would be able without difficulty to obtain a seat in the House of Commons.

One argument in favour of the continued existence of the House of Lords is often advanced by Radicals, against which I am anxious to enter a very decided protest. It is said, if the House of Lords were abolished, peers would be eligible to become members of the House of Commons, and so many of them would be returned as to give great additional strength to the Conservative party. It certainly seems inconsistent with all the true principles of Liberalism, that an institution should be maintained and a class monopoly defended, because some able representatives of a particular party are thus excluded from the House of Commons. As Liberals we can surely have little faith in the truth and justice of our principles, if we desire to see our opponents artificially impeded from having their cause promoted by the advocates they would be most willing to select. Let us hope that no such narrow-minded considerations as these will prevail. It is certainly above all things the duty of those who hold Radical or Democratic opinions to strive after the

abolition of all political privileges enjoyed independently of merit, and at the same time to seek to remodel our institutions so as to make the Parliament of the future, whether it consist of one or two Chambers, as representative as possible of the whole community.

H. F.

XIII.

AN AMERICAN ON REPRESENTATION*.

THE fate of the Ballot Bill last session and the prospect of its reintroduction at an early date after the assembling of Parliament, have brought once more before the consideration of the public the subject of Representative Reform. It may not, therefore, be inappropriate to draw attention to the appearance of Mr Simon Sterne's book on Representative Government and Personal Representation. A contribution towards the solution of the difficulties that beset the path of electoral reform is always valuable, but its value is in some respects enhanced when, as in the present instance, the contribution is made by an American writer. The problems that now engage the attention of most of the leading political thinkers of America are not without a deep significance for reformers in this country. In many respects the political situations in England and in America are closely analogous. The chief difference is that in America all

* *On Representative Government and Personal Representation*, by Simon Sterne. Philadelphia, 1871.

Fraser's Magazine. February, 1872.

the favourite panaceas which English Radicals are constantly recommending, and by which they expect to rid this country of political corruption, of Government jobbery, and of class ascendency, have long been established parts of the American political system. We are frequently told by the representatives of the old school of English Radicals that the remedy for all the ills that beset our political life will be found when we have obtained universal suffrage and the ballot. There are even those who go further, and who say that to these reforms we must add, in order to reach political perfection, the adoption of Republican institutions. Let those who think such changes in our governmental system would in any way solve the questions of electoral reform, glance at Mr Sterne's book, and see there how an earnest and able writer regards the political prospects of his own country, which has long enjoyed all the advantages which the Ballot, Universal Suffrage and Republicanism can afford.

Party machinery has, according to Mr Sterne, so completely superseded the independent action of the electors, and this party machinery has, from inevitable causes, fallen so completely into the hands of unscrupulous and corrupt party politicians, that, under the present electoral system, the escape of individual electors, by any efforts of their own, from the power of an organized network of corruption is well-nigh impossible. Municipal and political offices are all manipulated by the party for their own purposes; the party organization is such that it has its ramifications through every state, resembling an army of soldiers,

with every conceivable rank and grade, from commander-in-chief to ensign. The holders of all offices are advanced only by giving proof of strict fidelity to party discipline, and by means of service in the party machinery, or of controlling votes and money.

"The local politician, being dependent for his preferment upon the goodwill of his superiors, is as little likely to rebel as the ensign of a military company against the orders of his captain. The political hierarchy imposes its yoke upon the leaders as well as the subaltern officers of the party machinery. It doubtless frequently occurs that, as a matter of individual predilection, they would prefer to put some worthy and capable man, not a member of the organization, in a political position; but it cannot be done because it would 'demoralize' (make less faithful) their followers, for the selfsame reason that a commander-in-chief would not dare to appoint a foreign officer, however great his merits, in command of an important division of the army." p. 85.

Mr Sterne points out that the influence of this party machinery pervades the whole of public life in America. Not only is it felt in strictly political matters, but the municipal elections are fought upon precisely the same party lines as the political elections. It is frequently, says Mr Sterne, a matter of surprise to strangers to find that Americans concern themselves about the political opinions of their city chamberlain, treasurer, corporation counsel, or prosecuting attorney. It might be supposed that the only proper ground of enquiry in such a case is whether the candidate is honest and capable.

"What a superficial view of the situation such surprise exhibits! The possession of the vast funds in the city coffers are of vital importance to the political parties. By means of these, and these only, men can devote their lives to politics and to perfect the machinery. The city of New York, for instance, raises by taxation and expends yearly

about 20,000,000 of dollars. It is ordinarily supposed that about one-half of this is misapplied; however that may be, the *whole of that sum* is used to build up the party organization. It is the life-blood of the party, and pulsates to the Rio Grande, precisely as the fat offices in large cities in the gift of the Federal power answer the same purposes for the same or the opposite party. It is for this reason that we cannot get rid of party in our local elections by the means we have hitherto seen fit to adopt. You cannot shake off the politician in the city, because the city's coffers give him control of the State; and it is just this rock which has shipwrecked all the efforts of well-meaning but shortsighted philanthropists in the direction of municipal reform. When the politician gives to you the city, he gives you the Malakoff of his position, and he will hold it just so long as our majority system of government makes party a necessity." p. 87.

It must be remembered that these words were written some months before the discreditable transactions of the Tammany Ring became public. Previous to these disclosures, it might, perhaps, have been thought that Mr Sterne's view of the case was exaggerated and prejudiced. But the events to which we have referred have strikingly verified every one of the statements contained in the foregoing passage. The system of representation prevailing in America and in England throws the whole representation into the hands of the dominant party. The power thus acquired was used by the New York democrats to exclude all but their own creatures from municipal offices, and an organized system of public frauds, on a scale of unparalleled magnitude, was the result. The chiefs of the Tammany Ring not only had uncontrolled power over the finances of the city, but they made every New Yorker know that the consequences to himself would be unpleasant if he tried to expose or to check their proceedings. Any one who ventured

to show public spirit was punished by having his property assessed at an extravagant rate; and the Ring attacked the *New York Times*, which had dared to expose official malpractices, in a frivolous and vexatious lawsuit. Even now that the frauds of the Ring have been exposed in every newspaper in the world, it seems very doubtful if there is any power strong enough to bring Mr Tweed and his associates to justice. Mr Tweed has himself within the last two or three months been returned as a member of the State legislature, and this assembly, as well, it is said, as some of the judges, are the purchased instruments of the Ring*. While all the world has been horrified at the scandalous history of the Tammany Ring, it has not, so far as we are aware, been generally recognized that these frauds owe their origin and their success to the system of Representation prevailing in America. This system, as previously remarked, throws all the Representation into the hands of the dominant political party. That party which has the most money, the most influence (pecuniary or otherwise), and the fewest moral scruples, consequently becomes the sole possessor of power; and when once in power it can manipulate the finances of the city for the purposes of political corruption, after the fashion of the Tammany Ring.

Mr Sterne lays great stress on the fact that, besides fostering and facilitating corruption, the present representative system in America almost entirely destroys the independence of the individual voter, and

* Since this was written the organisation of the Committee of Seventy has caused the collapse of the Ring.

renders him subservient to the party machinery. The necessity of belonging to a majority if he is to obtain any representation virtually forces the voter to join a political party and to support the party platform. The members of a political party thus formed do not ask themselves what they ought to do,—the only practical question is, What will be most successful? "Thus," says Mr Sterne, "the process of creating a majority demoralizes those who compose it: it demoralizes them in this sense, that it excludes the action of their higher moral attributes, and brings into operation the lower motives. They are compelled to disregard all individuality, and therefore all genuine earnestness of opinion; to discard their political knowledge; their deliberate judgment; their calm and conscientious reflection,—all must be withdrawn or brought down to a conformity with those who possess the least of these qualities." The same injurious influences operate also on the minorities which are struggling to become majorities; the process of deterioration thus goes rapidly on until the more intelligent and the more scrupulous voters, feeling that they have no power to prevent their party from adopting courses they disapprove, withdraw from political activity, and leave the whole business of legislation in the hands of the party wire-pullers and their tools. The following illustration, taken from the pages of Mr Sterne, indicates the manner in which the prevailing system of representation curtails the independence of the voter, and either prevents him from voting at all, or induces him to vote for a representative whose opinions and actions he disapproves.

"*A* is a voter in the State of New York, in sympathy with the system of reconstruction of the Southern States adopted by the dominant party in Congress; he is also a free-trader, and therefore opposed to the fiscal measures of this same dominant majority. The party place before him, as a candidate for the House, a Republican, who is a protectionist; if the voter considers free-trade of less importance than the question of reconstruction, he votes for one who, as he well knows, will, in the representative body, vote for measures which *A* firmly believes to be pernicious and immoral.

B is a voter in Ohio; he utterly detests the whole system of reconstruction Congress has seen fit to adopt, and believes the tenets of the opposite party, upon all questions relating to the status of the citizens who had seceded from the government, to be the right ones; but this same party hints, in the campaign of his State, at repudiation which may adversely affect his interests or revolt his moral nature; he casts therefore his vote for a representative whose whole course in Congress he deems dangerous and vicious, in order that that candidate shall not prevail who is pledged to a course which he regards as still more dangerous. The voter is not free; his vote, or rather the possibility of making it effectual, is fettered with a condition which makes the act of voting cease to be equivalent to an expression of opinion,—and the representative chamber thus formed, therefore, does not even meet the primary postulate of such a body—that it shall represent the opinions of the people whose votes elect the representatives."

Besides the direct evil accruing from the subservience of the individual voter to party machinery, Mr Sterne shows that the system encourages the open and flagrant corruption of the representatives. This corruption is, he says, so universal, that the very statement no longer excites repugnance. "To charge a legislator with the selling of his vote seems as commonplace as to charge a harlot with want of chastity." Quoting from an essay of Mr Charles Gaepp, he adds (p. 91) that

"Moneyed men, associated under various titles, have gradually bought up, under the name of corporate privileges, the more important prerogatives of taxation and administration. A generation

ago they approached the leading politicians as supplicants, now they hold them in pay, and use them not to extort further immunities, but generally to control the entire machinery of the body politic."

The political corruption of America has given rise to the formation of a technical language of its own, and in Mr Sterne's pages we may read a full account of what he calls "the corrupting, loathsome, and dangerous disease known as the 'spoils.'" In another place we are informed of the signification of the term "making a slate;" and further on we are initiated into the mysteries of "gerrymandering."

Some readers may be interested in learning the signification of these terms. The political disease which Americans call "the spoils" has its origin in the regulation which gives to the President the power of removal of incumbents of Federal Offices without cause and without the consent of Congress. The redistribution of these offices among the faithful followers of the triumphant party is an event which usually succeeds a presidential election. Readers of the *Biglow Papers* will remember references to the "spoils" which may be expected to be shared by the friends of the winning side, in the "Letter from a Candidate for the Presidency." The postscript of this letter begins:

"Ez we're a sort o' privateerin',
O' course, you know, it's sheer an' sheer,
An' there is sutthin' worth your hearin'
I'll mention in your privit ear;
Ef you git *me* inside the White House,
Your head with ile I'll kind o' 'nint,
By gittin *you* inside the Light-house
Down to the eend o' Jaalam Pint."

The corrupting influence of these spoils of the Pre-

sidential office is keenly satirised in other passages of the *Biglow Papers.*

The meaning of the term "making a slate" shall be given in Mr Sterne's words:

"Having traced the building-up of the party, let us see how the nominations are made, and how every element which should enter into the question of nominating men for public office is, by our system, carefully excluded. The leaders of the political parties meet in caucus, and determine upon the men who shall fill the various public offices, this is called making a slate; when that is done, the trusty leaders of the various districts, precincts, and wards, if in a city; or townships, if in the country, are informed that they shall, at the meetings in their respective districts, send their delegates to a nominating convention of the party. These meetings, or primaries, are not recognized or regulated by law. They are held at some obscure, and generally disreputable tavern; so that the very meeting-place acts as a repellent against the influx of non-desirable, *i.e.* respectable citizens. The form of an election is gone through with, and such delegates as have been previously determined upon are elected. Should, by any accident, a sufficient number of respectable people attend such a primary meeting, so that they could outnumber the hired ruffians of the party machine, the meeting is broken up by a fight, and the delegates are elected at some other meeting. Generally however it is not necessary to resort to these means."

"Gerrymandering," although the name is exclusively American, is not altogether unknown in England. It consists of manipulation of the boundaries of constituencies, so as to make them include or exclude districts which are supposed to be favourable or otherwise to the dominant political party. The power to "gerrymander," however, occurs in England only on the rare occasion of a redistribution of political power; whereas, owing to the rapid growth of new districts in America, and the consequent frequency of extending the area of representation, gerrymandering

appears to be a perennial plant. Speaking of bribery Mr Sterne says:

"With us there is very little direct bribing of the voter,—that species of corruption is more general in England than in the United States; but there is almost invariable packing and bribing of nominating conventions, and, from an ethical point of view, it can make but very little difference whether the bribe is a direct one of money, or, as is usually the case, an indirect one of office, from the person to be nominated."

On almost every page of Mr Sterne's book one may learn that the very worst political diseases are compatible with the presence of those institutions which some would have us suppose to be all powerful in preserving the health of the body politic. We wish every politician who, in England, aspires to the present American model as the type of all that representative institutions should be, would spend an hour in the perusal of Mr Sterne's third chapter, entitled, "What are the Effects of the Present System of Representation?" We think he could hardly rise from the study of it without having experienced some enlargement of his political horizon.

It should not, however, be assumed that the evils of which Mr Sterne complains are the result of the Democratic system of America. In England the same evils, perhaps in a modified form, are springing up. We have the same party subserviency, and a candidate here experiences the same overwhelming temptation to give up the straightforward expression of his individual opinions in order to conform to the particular shibboleths dictated by active sections of his constituency. In England a Liberal candidate is

almost forced to declare himself in favour of the ballot, in Ireland a similar pressure is brought to bear upon Liberal candidates to support denominational education. In this way the independence and honesty of candidates are destroyed, and those considerable sections of the Liberal party, which in England are opposed to the ballot, and in Ireland object to denominationalism, are totally unrepresented in the House of Commons. The lesson to be learnt from Mr Sterne's book is not contempt for Democratic institutions, but distrust of the present electoral system of England and America, the evils of which all the boasted remedies of Democracy are powerless to remove.

In the concluding words of the chapter just referred to, Mr Sterne says:

"The system now in vogue has given us corrupt party organizations and caucuses, causes 'primaries' and party strifes, causes slates in conventions and political wire-pulling, and, what is perhaps worst of all, it causes sudden and almost violent changes of public policy by throwing governmental power from the hands of one unbridled majority into the hands of an equally unbridled majority, with principles of an exactly opposite character. The plans we shall offer emancipate the citizen from all these evils and allow our governmental machinery to be improved in strict harmony with the moral and intellectual progress of the people."

The electoral reforms suggested by Mr Sterne embody, in one form or another, the principle of proportional, or, as he elsewhere calls it, totality representation. Of the various schemes he recommends, several are so well known in England as scarcely to require even a passing analysis here. The plan of representative reform, known in connection with the name of Mr Hare, has been the subject of so many

essays, pamphlets, and speeches, that Mr Sterne's pages will probably not afford to English readers any new information on the subject. The School-board elections have rendered the merits and defects of the cumulative vote familiar topics of conversation in nearly every constituency in the country; and the battle about the so-called three-cornered constituencies is only just beginning to abate some of its fury. There is one new mode of obtaining approximately a representation of the entire number of electors described in Mr Sterne's book.

Before adverting to it, we will give a *resumé* of what strikes us as one of the most powerful arguments ever advanced in favour of an alteration in the present mode of conducting elections. In chapter I. entitled "What is Representative Government?" Mr Sterne shows that the origin of representative institutions is to be found in the right which every citizen is supposed to have to a share in making the laws to which he is subject. In the ancient Athenian Republic, prior to the birth of representation, every male citizen above 20 years of age exercised personally all those duties which now devolve on the legislatures of Republican forms of government. "The characteristic traits of a Democratic constitution were here fully developed; each citizen could speak, vote upon, or propose any law or resolution." Government by the people themselves was the original form of Democratic institutions, but it is obvious that this primitive method of conducting legislation is possible only when the State is composed of one city, or is so small in compass that the whole of the citizens can readily meet at regular and

stated intervals. Another condition of this form of government is the necessary leisure on the part of each citizen to devote his thoughts and time to public questions. For nations covering a wide area, and whose citizens are for the most part engrossed in the performance of mental or manual labour, the form of democracy possessed by the ancient Athenians is utterly impracticable; such a people, if they desire to preserve the democratic idea, must, as Mr Sterne says, "do the work of legislation by deputies or representatives..... Representative government is not, therefore, an original organic form, but a machinery necessitated by modern civilization and requirements of life to make democratic government possible." This machinery, he further points out, is more or less possible in proportion as it succeeds in securing to every elector a representative in the legislative assembly. Hence the object of all representative machinery should be to represent not merely the majority, but the whole of the electors. If this were done, or if this were attempted approximately to be done, there would be not the slightest interference with the just and undisputed right of the majority to govern. The right of representation and the right of decision are entirely different political ideas and processes. "The right of representation is based upon the assumed right on the part of the citizen to take part in the business of making the laws which are to govern him; but, as there are practical difficulties in the way of his doing so, he must appear by deputy; each elector is thus entitled to appear by deputy. The present machinery of representation, of voting, and of election is devised to accomplish this end. It does not accom-

plish it; it wastes away from one-fourth to one-half the votes of a community; to the extent that it does so, it as effectually disfranchises the citizen as if a positive law disqualified him from going to the polls; it gives him the semblance, but deprives him of the substance, of his right." The true theory of Representation—viz. that Parliament should be to the nation what a chart is to the physical configuration of the soil, that in all its parts, and as a whole, the representative body should at all times present a reduced picture of the entire people—has been so completely lost sight of both in this country and in America, that any plan which would give a practical recognition of the right of all electors to representation has been treated as a gross infringement of the right of the majority to govern. In point of fact, the present system is a violation of this right. If the whole body of electors were represented, the power of decision on any point brought before the Legislative Assembly would rest absolutely with the majority. Now, it must be remembered, a majority in the House must necessarily, in many cases, represent a minority in the country. If every 10,000 electors returned a member, we could be sure that a Parliamentary majority of three-fifths represented a majority in the country, but under the present system we have no security that this is the case. As frequently pointed out by writers on this subject, the majority of a majority may be a minority. For instance, Parliament may represent two-thirds of the electors; in this case, supposing each member of the Legislature to be returned by an equal number of electors, a Parliamentary majority of three-fifths would represent a

minority in the country, for two-thirds multiplied by three-fifths is two-fifths; so that a measure carried by a considerable majority in the Assembly would be in accordance with the wishes of less than half the electors. Writers on these new electoral systems, which tend to secure the representation of all sections and classes in proportion to their numerical strength, have damaged their own position by advocating their favourite schemes in the name of the rights of minorities. The real result of the adoption of such of these schemes as are practicable would be the vindication of the right of the majority to govern. For it is only by insuring the representation of all that the legislative power of the majority is safe.

Having by a careful analysis of democratic institutions shown that an electoral machinery ought to aim at the representation of all the electors, Mr Sterne proceeds, as we before remarked, to explain to his American readers various forms of proportional representation, with which most English political students are familiar. There is however, one scheme advocated by Mr Sterne, which will probably be new to most of his readers, both in England and in America. This plan is to regard each vote as a power of attorney and allow none to enter the Legislative Assembly who had not a given number—say 5,000—of such powers, and then let the representative cast in the Chamber one vote for each five thousand that have been recorded in his favour at the polls. There are objections to be urged against the adoption of this plan; it would throw enormous power into the hands of those who flattered the ignorance of the masses, and would offer a

most tempting prize to the worst style of demagogue. This might, however, lead to the desired result of ultimately weakening the power of demagogues; for if the interests of the nation suffered through the incapacity or immorality of its representatives, it would be likely at the next election to replace them by more trustworthy statesmen. Whatever theoretical objections may be urged against this scheme, it has the immense practical advantage of simplicity. No essays or philosophical treatises are required to explain its operation, and it is free from all the most formidable difficulties in the way of the adoption of any plan of alternative voting. For a full exposition of the merits of this scheme, as well as a fair statement of the objections urged against it, we must refer our readers to Mr Sterne.

We have one accusation to bring against our author. In the introductory chapter he assures us that in his pages we shall meet with no disquisitions as to the qualifications for the Parliamentary suffrage. "With the question of the suffrage, as such," he says on page 14, "I have here no concern; whether it is a natural right or the investment of a political privilege, what should be its limitations, whether it should be extended to women or children, or whether it should be restricted, will form no part of this work." After this assurance it is astonishing to find several pages devoted to discussions on Negro suffrage, and also on the extension of the franchise to Women. We cannot help wishing that, after writing these pages, Mr Sterne had remembered the good resolution formally expressed in his introduction and implied in his title-page; if he had done this, so conscientious an author could not

have failed to preserve his good faith with his readers by striking his pen through these passages, which are quite irrelevant to the subject-matter of the work, and do not betray any familiarity with the subject with which they attempt to deal. On the other hand, when he is on his own subject, he is complete master of all the facts of the case. He knows the history of every method of personal representation, and whether dealing with the comprehensive scheme of Mr Hare or that which was put in operation in Denmark sixteen years ago by Mr Andræ, whether describing the cumulative voting at the English School-board elections or the plan of personal representation lately adopted in the State elections of Illinois, he is equally at home with the facts, and equally ready to submit to his readers a fair statement of the arguments on both sides. Nor, in dealing with his particular branch of the great subject of electoral reform, does Mr Sterne fall into the too common error of aiming at theoretical perfection to the total neglect of the practical question, "Will it work?" He does not regard these schemes of personal representation as if their end and aim were to provide a new kind of intellectual gymnastics. There is no need to remind him that electoral machinery is not meant to be a philosophical toy, but something that will stand wear and tear, and a good deal of rough usage from those who, either from ignorance or stupidity, do not understand how the machine should be used, and also from those who cunningly strive to make the working of the machine conduce to their own interests. The fact that the existing electoral machinery of America affords so much facility for the carrying

out of the plans of this latter class of political speculators is probably the cause of, and is certainly a sufficient justification for, the appearance of the present volume. Whatever may be the opinion formed of the respective merits of the various schemes advocated in Mr Sterne's book, we trust it may lead English Radicalism to look to something more than universal suffrage and the ballot as the ideal of political perfection.

M. G. F.

XIV.

ON VARIOUS SCHEMES FOR SECURING PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION*.

Part I.

It is reported that not long since three well-known Liberal members of Parliament sat up together till four o'clock in the morning discussing the future of the party to which they belonged. After six hours of talk they confessed themselves quite unable to see what work would be left for the Liberal party after once the Land Bill and the Education Bill were disposed of. "Now that the Reform question is settled," said one, "and Church-rates abolished, and the University Tests Bill and the Ballot as good as passed, there are no more English questions." In fact, the prevalent feeling was that by the year after next the British Constitution would be so ideally perfect, that the *raison d'être* of the Liberal party would be destroyed, and that the great political firm, which had so long and so proudly exhibited the placard of "Repairs neatly executed," would have to retire from business.

* *Macmillan's Magazine*, Sept. 1870, and March, 1871.

If these gentlemen had looked over the pages of Dod's *Parliamentary Companion*, perhaps it might have occurred to them that there are a few incongruities in our representative system, and that the Liberal party might occupy itself in repairing some of the weak places in this much-neglected part of the constitutional machinery. It might, for instance, be observed that one member is returned to Parliament by the suffrages of 69 electors, whilst in another place an unsuccessful candidate polled 10,824 votes. Surely some little occupation might be found for the Liberal party in remedying this state of things. It may be too much to expect that an attempt should be made to obtain an equal amount of electoral power for each voter; but that a voter in one place should have 132 times more electoral power than a voter in another place is an absurd violation of all principles of representation. At the general election of 1868, Mr Dalglish, the member for Glasgow, polled 18,292 votes; Mr Dawson Damer, at Portarlington, polled 69 votes. There are three members for Glasgow, but each elector has only two votes. There is one member for Portarlington; therefore the amount of representation possessed by each of Mr Dalglish's supporters may be indicated by $\frac{1}{9146}$, and that of each of Mr Dawson Damer's supporters by $\frac{1}{69}$. In other words, it may be stated roughly that the inhabitants of Portarlington have 132 times as much representation as the inhabitants of Glasgow.

These are of course the most extreme cases; but if the comparison is made wider, the result is almost equally startling. At the general election of 1868,

Ten successful candidates in various places polled 159,650 votes.

Ten successful candidates in other places polled 1,873 votes.

Ten unsuccessful candidates in various places polled 83,217 votes.

Such figures as these require no comment; gross as is the absurdity they reveal in our representative system, no legislative attempt has ever been made to remedy it, except by disfranchising a few of the very smallest constituencies—a mode of attack which leaves altogether untouched the most formidable part of the difficulty. It may be readily conceded that the 1,873 electors who have returned ten members to the present House of Commons possess more than a fair share of representation; but the difficulty lies in attempting to obtain a due amount of representation for the 83,217 electors who voted for ten unsuccessful candidates. There has been great exception taken by the Manchester school of Liberals at the idea of representing minorities; but it is minority representation with a vengeance to give ten members to 1,873 voters, and to withhold all representation from 83,217. Other instances of the unjust power which the present representative system gives to minorities may be found in the events of the session of 1871. In three important divisions, the minority represented a majority of voters. One of these divisions was on the 18th clause of the Ballot Bill, which would have thrown on constituencies the necessary expenses of conducting elections. On this occasion the minority who supported the clause represented about 50,000 more electors than

the majority. The other divisions were on the acceptance of the Lords' amendments to the Trades' Unions Bill, and on the Contagious Diseases Acts. The numbers on this latter subject were 46 to 58; or a majority of 12.

The 46 represented 677,000 voters.
The 58 ..... 287,000 .....

On this occasion, therefore, the majority in the House of Commons represented a minority of 390,000 in the constituencies.

The Chartists proposed a partial remedy for the inequalities of the present representative system by making "equal electoral districts" one of the points of the Charter. This scheme was also advocated by Mr Cobden; but it may perhaps be shown that though the division of the country into equal electoral districts, each returning one member, would remove some of the most glaring defects of the present system, it would not touch the difficulty of obtaining representation for local minorities. For instance, Manchester might be divided into ten districts, each containing 3,000 voters, and each district returning one member. In might happen that in each of these districts the Conservatives were a considerable minority; in this case, though forming a very large proportion of the total number of voters in Manchester, they would be deprived of all representation, because in each particular district they happened to be in a minority. Assuming the number of voters in Manchester to be 30,000, of whom 17,000 were Liberals, and 13,000 Conservatives, it would be quite possible that all the members returned by the ten equal electoral districts

would be Liberals; the Conservatives being outnumbered in every district by an average majority of 400. Now, in this case, the 13,000 Conservatives are quite unrepresented, and the ten members, who are sent to Parliament to represent the electors of Manchester, do not represent as many as three-fifths of them. A perfect representative system would ensure a proportional representation of the whole of the electors of Manchester, and would not admit the possibility of a part of the constituency obtaining the whole of the representation. It is sometimes said that it would be impossible to invent any system of returning members to Parliament which would not be liable to accidental imperfections; that it is very unlikely the proportion of Liberals to Conservatives would be so nearly similar in all the districts as to leave all the representation to one party; and besides, even if this were so, and if the Conservatives were beaten in every district in Manchester, they might be consoled by the reflection that the Conservatives had been victorious in all the districts of Liverpool. They are told to be content, since, though they are under-represented in Manchester, some other persons are over-represented in Liverpool. Lindley Murray says, "Two negatives in English destroy one another, and are equivalent to an affirmative." The line of argument just described seems to assume that "two injustices, in England, destroy one another, and are equivalent to justice." The idea of the minority in one place being represented by the majority in another place is certainly ingenious, but it overlooks the fact of there being any differences between members of the

same political party. There are Liberals and Liberals, and it was probably no source of consolation to Mr Mill's supporters in Westminster to know that in Marylebone Mr Harvey Lewis had been returned by a triumphant majority.

The whole question of what is sometimes called minority representation seems to turn on the point whether members are sent to Parliament to represent persons or places—human beings, or bricks and mortar. It is said that popular phraseology favours the latter view; but surely when the member for Manchester or Newcastle is spoken of, it is only a short way of saying the member for the electors of Manchester or Newcastle. If this is the case, and if members of Parliament are returned to represent the inhabitants of certain places, a plan of returning these members should be adopted which will ensure the representation of as many as possible of the electors. If the place returns four members, and the Liberals in the constituency, as compared with the Conservatives, are as three to one, then three Liberal members should be returned to one Conservative. Supposing something like this actually to have taken place, as at the last general election in the city of London, the whole, or nearly the whole, of the electors are represented in some proportion to their numbers.

The plan which has been adopted for obtaining proportional representation in boroughs and counties returning three or more members is open to many objections. According to this plan, each elector, in a place returning three members, has two votes; in a place returning four members, he has three votes. Hence in

a constituency returning three members a minority of $\frac{2}{5} + 1$ can ensure the return of one member. Supposing the constituency to contain 100 electors, a minority of 41 can return one member. For the remaining 59 electors, or 118 votes, if distributed between three candidates, produce an average poll for each candidate of $39\frac{1}{3}$, or $1\frac{2}{3}$ less than the number of votes polled by the minority candidate.

Under this scheme there is no inducement to the minority to start only one candidate; in nearly all the cases in which there were contests in three-cornered constituencies at the last general election, two candidates were started by the minority. The effect of this, where parties are tolerably equally divided, is, that the majority first secure the return of their own two candidates, and then they are able to decide which of the two minority candidates shall be returned. At the last election for Cambridgeshire four candidates were started, two Conservatives and two Liberals. The Conservatives had a considerable majority, and the return of their candidates was at two o'clock virtually secured. The remaining Conservative votes were then used to prevent the return of the most Radical of the two Liberal candidates. During the last hour and a half of the election the contest lay between the two Liberal candidates. The Liberal electors remained true to their pledges to divide their votes between their candidates, who consequently remained neck and neck, until a few well-disciplined Tories came and plumped for the least Radical candidate, who was thus returned by a majority of ten over his colleague.

It is, of course, irritating to the minority to be thus

virtually deprived of the right of selecting between their own candidates the one whom they consider their fittest representative. The fact that the ultimate choice is frequently left to their opponents is also apt to have a demoralizing influence on candidates. If two Liberals are standing in a three-cornered constituency, and they know their party is in a minority, and that the result of the election will probably be decided by Tory votes, a very strong inducement is offered to them to hang out for Tory support; in this way elections in three-cornered constituencies are likely to result in the return of a member for the minority whose opinions differ as little as possible from those of the majority. The Conservative member for Manchester, for example, is always likely to have a dash of Radicalism in his political opinions. Both these considerations detract from the value of what is known as three-cornered voting as a means of securing personal representation; but when every disadvantage connected with a three-cornered contest has been duly weighed, it must be allowed that though the power of the majority is very great, even in deciding who shall be the member for the minority, yet the result does afford a much truer representation than when the majority is all-powerful, and can command every seat. It is true that the Conservatives decided which of the two Liberal candidates should be the member for Cambridgeshire, but, notwithstanding this, Cambridgeshire is much more truly represented in Parliament than it would have been, had a majority, exceeding by about two hundred half the total number of votes polled, been able to monopolise all three seats.

All schemes for obtaining proportional representa-

tion assume that it is desirable that Parliament should be the mirror of the nation; and that all existing diversities of opinion should possess in Parliament a strength proportional to their strength in the country. It is this assumption which the enemies of proportional representation should attack. Instead of doing so they are content with calling one scheme impracticable, another unconstitutional, and so forth. The scheme most generally denounced as impracticable, because perhaps it is the most theoretically perfect, is Mr Hare's; the scheme which has received the dreadful name of unconstitutional is that known as cumulative voting. The latter plan, which is now in operation for the election of school-boards, would provide that in every election for the return of more than two members, each voter should have as many votes as there are vacancies to fill; but that instead of being compelled, as at present, either to split all his votes, or to waste some of them, he should be allowed to distribute his votes among the candidates in any proportion he pleased. In a place returning three members a man would be allowed either to give one vote to each of the three candidates, or to give three votes to one candidate, or to give two votes to one candidate and one vote to another. By this means a minority of $\frac{1}{4} + 1$ could, in a place returning three members, secure one-third of the representation. The great defect of such forms of proportional representation is that, by leaving local representation in its present position, they limit the choice of electors to the candidates who present themselves for election in a particular constituency. 'By so doing they prevent the total result of

a general election being really representative of the entire nation; for if all constituencies returned three members, and if cumulative voting were adopted, local minorities of less than one-fourth would still remain unrepresented, although they might form a very important portion of the entire body of electors throughout the country. There is for instance, in all probability, a minority in every borough in England who would rather see Mr Odger in Parliament than any other man whatever. If Mr Odger were allowed to be an All-England candidate, he would probably obtain more votes than any other member of Parliament. Hitherto, in whatever place he has been a candidate, it has always proved that his supporters are a local minority. Cumulative voting would, it is true, be a great step towards securing the return of such a man as Mr Odger; but it would not make his return certain, for if his supporters in the place for which he was a candidate were fewer than one-fourth, they would be unable to return him.

It is a noticeable illustration of the defects of our present representative system which would not be remedied by the adoption of the cumulative vote, that although nearly two millions of the population of England are Catholics, there is not the most remote chance of the return of one representative of English Catholicism to Parliament. Every constituency contains some Catholics, but in no English constituency are they sufficiently numerous to determine the selection of a candidate. It may perhaps be replied that the English Catholics have no reason to be dissatisfied, since in the south of Ireland the tables are turned;

there Protestants have no chance of representation, and Catholics are all-powerful in determining who shall be returned. We have already commented on the supposition that an injustice in one place is remedied by an injustice in another, but it may be further remarked that it is extremely unlikely that Catholics in England exactly coincide, even in questions bearing on their faith, with the opinions of Irish Catholics. The majority of the voters in Irish Catholic constituencies are always ardently Ultramontane; all the candidates, no matter what their previous opinions may have been, vie with each other in courting the support of the most extreme section of the Catholic clerical party, by denouncing mixed education and by promising on all occasions of doubt and difficulty to consult with their valued friends the priests. Thus it comes to pass that so far from English Catholics being "virtually represented" by the Irish members, Irish Catholics themselves are not truly represented; those only of them are represented who are content to be guided by the precepts of Cardinal Cullen. There is sufficient evidence to prove the existence in Ireland of a powerful section of Catholics who approve of mixed education; the views of Sir Robert Kane, as lately expressed in his Appendix to the Report of the Royal Commission on Primary Education, of which he was a member, are probably shared by many thousands of his countrymen, and yet there is no chance of any Catholic being returned in Ireland who does not pledge himself to do his utmost to destroy the national system of education in that country. There is no certainty that this state of things would be remedied by the cumulative vote.

The great advantage which Mr Hare's plan possesses over all other schemes of proportional representation is, that it would give to each elector one vote, and would allow him to give this vote to any candidate he pleased. The choice of an elector would not be restricted to the candidates who might happen to present themselves for election in any particular constituency. By this means a minority, however locally insignificant, could join its votes with those of other electors in other localities, and thus secure the return of a representative. If, for instance, 600 members had to be returned at a general election, and the voters in all the constituencies amounted to 600,000, any thousand electors, no matter where they resided—they might be scattered in twos and threes all over the country—could secure the return of a representative. The present restricted choice of constituencies seems to act as a process of natural selection to weed out from Parliament, and from political activity in constituencies, men whose opinions are characterised by special loftiness or originality. Even ordinary uprightness and intelligence sometimes deter electors from joining actively in political life. An honest, intelligent, and cultivated man is apt to turn in disgust from taking any part in an election, when he finds that he has to choose between voting for a promoter of false and fraudulent companies, a religious bigot, or a man who has never read a book or had an idea in his life. If such an elector could feel that he was not compelled to submit to the farce of being represented by such candidates, but could choose from among all public men, who were willing to undertake the duties and responsibilities of a member of

Parliament, he would no longer feel himself shut out from real representation, and a stimulus of the very best kind would thus be given to political activity. In all contests there is enough and to spare of the worst kind of activity and enthusiasm, springing from the meanest and most contemptible of passions; if political life is to be improved, it is not by crushing out activity and enthusiasm, but by changing the source from which they too often spring. A strong influence would be brought to bear in this direction by affording the means of real representation to all voters, instead of leaving them to the tender mercies of local candidates.

The absolute tyranny of the majority is not only prejudicial to the political activity of the minority, it also exercises a very demoralising influence on candidates. A gentleman goes down to stand for a certain constituency, and he is told that he will not be returned unless he can poll 3,000 votes. If it is an Irish constituency, he is further told that he may as well retire at once as not pledge himself in favour of denominational education; if it is an English constituency, he hears that 100 votes depend on his pledging himself in favour of the Permissive bill; of course he must support the ballot. Thus instead of a candidate declaring his political opinions openly and fearlessly, and then inviting all those who believe that he would represent them to support him at the poll, he goes down prepared to pledge himself to everything that may gain him a score of votes. The shameless way in which candidates at an election set themselves to catch votes, and attempt to gloss over anything in their previous expressions of opinion which might prejudice their

chances of success, is too flagrant to have escaped the notice of the most casual observer. Striking instances, if they are needed, could be found in the answers given by candidates to questions addressed to them on Sabbatarian subjects. It was only the other day that a candidate, well known by all his acquaintances to be strongly opposed to Sabbatarian prejudices, was asked at a public meeting whether it was true that he had supported the Sunday Lecture Society, and had contributed to its funds. The substance of the reply was, that he had certainly given a subscription to the Sunday Society, but it was a very small one, and had been sent a long time ago. The immense temptation which is offered to candidates to avoid the expression of any new, original, or unpopular ideas, has the necessary effect of lowering the intellectual and moral tone of the House of Commons. On the other hand, a comprehensive scheme of proportional representation would stimulate in two ways the intellectual and moral activity of Parliament. In the first place, candidates would stand on their own merits, and, instead of striving to make themselves simply inoffensive to their constituents, they would endeavour to distinguish themselves from the throng of candidates, and so attract the support of electors in various parts of the country; in the second place, the inducement to withdraw from political activity which is now felt by those voters who possess exceptional refinement, conscientiousness, or ability, would cease to exist. These, instead of being excluded from electoral power, would be able to seek and find real representatives, whose very presence in Parliament would be a great benefit to its deliberations.'

A very striking defect in our present representative system is the undue influence which mere wealth confers on its possessors. Election expenses are in nearly all cases so heavy, that none but the wealthy can afford to become candidates. These vie with each other in reckless and superfluous expenditure, and thus a tendency is created to make contests more and more costly. It can hardly be doubted that the corrupt expenditure of money at an election depends on the local character of the representation. If a candidate knew that he could poll votes all over the country, there would be no inducement for him to open public-houses in any particular place. Even at present, where a constituency is spread over a large area, as in counties, bribery is rare; not, it must be confessed, because of the exceptional virtue of county members, but because of the physical difficulty of bribing effectually, where the voters are widely scattered over a considerable tract of country. If bribery is rendered almost impossible in county constituencies, on account of the large area over which they extend, what chance would it have in constituencies spread over the length and breadth of the country? If bribery could receive a really deadly blow, and if the necessary expenses of elections were defrayed by the electors, the rich and the poor candidates would start on an equal footing; each would stand or fall on his own personal qualifications.

A great part of the opposition which all schemes for obtaining proportional representation have met with may be in some degree due to a misunderstanding of the expression "representation of minorities." The advocates of what was called "minority representation"

were supposed by some to desire to give as much power to the minority as to the majority; it was frequently asked with a triumphant air how the "minority plan" would answer inside the walls of Parliament itself, and whether it was proposed to legislate in the House according to the wishes of the minority. Such questions, of course, indicate an entire misunderstanding of all schemes for so-called "minority" representation. No such schemes ever proposed to deprive the majority of one iota of its just supremacy; all that is desired is that the power of the majority and of the minority in Parliament should be proportionate to their relative strength in the country. So far from depriving the majority of its power, proportional representation would secure the supremacy of the majority much more surely than it is secured at present. For now a Parliament may be returned whose members represent, not the whole nation, but the majority of the nation. The representatives of this majority do not agree in all particulars. Divisions are taken in the House, which are, of course, carried by the majority. Legislation is therefore carried on according to the wishes of the majority of a majority, which may be a minority. For suppose the House of Commons to represent $\frac{2}{3}$ of the nation, and that a division in the House is carried by a majority of $\frac{2}{3}$; a majority of a majority in such a case is a minority; for $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{2}{3} = \frac{4}{9}$. The course of legislation would therefore be decided by the wishes of a minority. This would be the case even supposing that each member was returned by an equal number of voters; under the present system, by which one member represents sixty-nine voters, and another eighteen thousand two hun-

dred and ninety-two, the minority very frequently enjoys the supremacy, which is justly claimed for the majority. On the other hand, if the whole nation were fairly represented in Parliament, the majority in the House would always represent the majority in the country, and the supremacy of this majority would consequently be much more secure than at present.

An attempt will be made in the second part of this article to explain the details of Mr Hare's scheme of proportional representation. In the various works that have appeared on the subject every minute detail has been fully explained, every remote contingency has been anticipated, and for all possible defects and difficulties remedies have been suggested. It would be idle, however, to deny that there are some difficulties in the working of the scheme for which the suggested remedies are not perfectly satisfactory. But after giving due weight to these difficulties, and making every allowance for unavoidable imperfections, it can hardly be denied that the advantages of this scheme preponderate immensely over its disadvantages, and these last appear insignificant compared with the disadvantages of the present system. At a meeting held some years ago, Mr Mill, in reply to an objection that this scheme was too complex to be understood, said that after having mastered both, he considered it much easier than the multiplication table. When the time arrives when this scheme is as well understood as the multiplication table, we believe there will not be many who will withhold their support from it.

M. G. F.

PART II.

A SHORT EXPLANATION OF MR HARE'S SCHEME OF REPRESENTATION.

In the discussions which from time to time have taken place on Mr Hare's scheme of representation, so much has been said on the one side of its simplicity, on the other side of its complexity, that it is a matter of no surprise that a large amount of confusion pervades the public mind regarding the merits of the scheme. It is the object of this paper to describe, as briefly as possible, its principles and details, without disguising the difficulties which would surround its practical application. The end and object of Mr Hare's scheme is the direct, equal, and personal representation in Parliament of every elector. If this end were accomplished, Parliament would become the mirror of the nation, and, in proportion to the extension of the suffrage, all opinions would have in Parliament a strength corresponding to their strength in the country. To attain this end it would be necessary that each voter should have an equal amount of electoral power. At present there is nothing to prevent an elector from having a score of votes in different constituencies. Non-residence not being a disqualification for the county franchise, a man may have a vote for every county in the kingdom, if he can possess himself of the

requisite property qualifications. To remedy this inequality Mr Hare's plan provides that each elector shall have but one vote; and in order to enable the elector to obtain real representation, he would be permitted to give this vote to any candidate, irrespective of the restrictions of local representation. For instance, a voter living in Hampshire could vote, if he chose, for a candidate standing in Yorkshire, or in any other part of the kingdom. Under this system, those who are willing to serve in Parliament might be described as "All England" Candidates, because they could poll votes in every constituency in the kingdom. If this plan of choosing members of Parliament were adopted, those candidates would of course be elected who obtained the largest number of votes; but in order to prevent inequality of electoral power through one candidate receiving an immensely large number of votes, Mr Hare's scheme provides that no candidate shall receive more votes than are sufficient to secure his return. For this purpose the following arrangement is proposed. It is obvious that if all electors were allowed to vote for any candidate, well known and popular men, such as Mr Gladstone and Mr Bright, would receive a large proportion of the entire number of votes polled. Equality of electoral power, which is one of the main objects of the scheme, would be destroyed if Mr Gladstone received six times as many votes as any other candidate; for his constituents would then not be sufficiently represented in proportion to their numbers. It has therefore been proposed to find, by dividing the total number of votes polled by the number of vacancies to be filled, the quota of votes

necessary for the return of each member. If 658 members are to be elected, and the total number of votes recorded is 2,632,000, four thousand votes would be the quota necessary for the return of a member. Each elector would vote by a voting paper, which would be drawn up in the following form:—

Name (of voter)_____
Address_____
Vote, No._____
Parish of_____
Borough of_____

The above-named elector hereby records his vote for the candidate named first in the subjoined list; or, in the event of such candidate being already elected, or not obtaining the quota, the above-named elector votes for the second-named candidate, and so on, in their numerical order, viz.:—

1. (Name of candidate)_____
2. (Ditto of another)_____
3. (Ditto of another)_____
4. (Ditto of another)_____

(and so on, adding as many as the elector chooses).

The foregoing form, filled up with the names proposed by the voter, expresses in substance this:—I desire to be represented by the candidate whose name I have placed No. 1. If he should obtain his quota of votes before mine comes to be counted, or if he should fail to obtain a sufficient number, and therefore cannot be elected, I direct that my vote be transferred to the Candidate I have placed as No. 2, and under the same conditions, to candidate No. 3, and so on*.

The above comprises the whole of the so-called complexity of Mr Hare's system of representation. The main principles of the scheme might be tabulated as follows:—

* Pamphlet on Representative Reform, issued by a Committee appointed by the Reform League, p. 9.

1. All voters to be represented in Parliament.

2. Each Member of Parliament to represent an equal number of voters.

3. Each elector to have one vote.

4. Electors to be allowed to vote for any candidate.

5. Electors to be allowed to transfer their votes from one candidate to another, so that no votes are thrown away for candidates already elected, or for those who have no chance of obtaining the quota.

The most striking effects of such a deviation from the traditional method of conducting elections would first be seen in Parliament itself. The House of Commons would then no longer be filled with local magnates, whose names are unknown outside their own boroughs, and whose only recommendation to serve in Parliament consists in their employing a large number of workmen, and being able consequently to command a considerable number of votes. On the contrary, the House of Commons would be filled by really representative men, who would be sent to Parliament not solely on account of their wealth and local influence, but on account of their opinions. A common charge brought against this plan of proportional representation is that it would bring into the House of Commons nobody but the representatives of crotchets. In reply to this it may be stated that it will be their own fault if the people without crotchets are unrepresented; if, indeed, they are so few as not to be able to secure a quota of votes for their candidates, then the House of Commons will justly be composed of crotchety

members; it would not be representative if it were not.

The effect of Mr Hare's scheme upon constituencies would be more gradual, but not less beneficial, than its effect on the House of Commons. The present system of selecting candidates leaves little or no choice to the mass of the electors; they must either support the candidate started by the wire-pullers of their own party or not vote at all. Hence the franchise is too often exercised merely mechanically; little study is given to political questions. Men vote with their party as a matter of course, and the minimum of political intelligence is evoked. If, on the other hand, electors were free to vote for whom they pleased, they would probably be induced to examine into the respective merits of a considerable number of candidates. Instead of voting blindly, and for no assignable reason, for the local candidate, they would be obliged to make a selection between many different candidates, and would feel that they were acting foolishly if they could not justify their choice. An elector is now seldom asked, "Why did you vote for Mr A?" If such a question were asked, the reply would probably be, "Mr A was brought out by the party; we didn't like him particularly, but we voted for him, because, if we had split, the other side would have got in their man." If electors were free to vote for any candidate, the question, "Why did you vote for Mr A?" would receive a very different answer. It would probably be something like this, "I read through his address, and his views on the political questions of the day are those that I hold; and, as far as one can judge of his charac-

ter, I believe him to be an honest and independent man." In this way the selection of a candidate would produce an educational and moral influence on each elector, especially as he would be required to name a succession of candidates, and to place them in the order in which he esteemed their merit. The educational effect produced by inducing electors carefully to weigh the respective claims of a large number of candidates would be very considerable, and would probably stimulate a great increase of the mental activity brought to bear on political questions. The moral effect produced by giving a free and independent choice of a representative to each elector would be invaluable. At present a candidate, no matter how bad his personal character may be, is thrust upon a constituency by half-a-dozen active wire-pullers, and the electors frequently have no choice between not voting at all, voting for a man of notoriously bad character, or voting against their political convictions. Few electors would deliberately declare that their free and unfettered choice as a representative, the man whom they desired above all others to see in Parliament, was a well-known *roué*, a fraudulent director of companies, or one who had been convicted of personal bribery; whereas, under the present system, scarcely any electors would think of withdrawing their support from their party candidate on the ground of moral disqualifications.

Whether, therefore, we look at its theoretical justice, or at its practical effect on the House of Commons and on constituencies, Mr Hare's scheme deserves our warmest admiration; it remains to be shown what are the difficulties, real and imaginary, in the way

of its application. Under the head of imaginary difficulties may be enumerated the following:—Filling up vacancies caused by the death or resignation of members; the destruction of the local character of representation; and the incompatibility of this scheme with the ballot. With regard to the first-named difficulty, that of filling up vacancies, it is with justice urged that though the minority gets a proportional representation at the time of a general election, the majority must carry all those bye elections where only one seat is contended for; and besides this, under Mr Hare's plan, according to which any elector may vote for any candidate, what constituency is a writ to be issued for on the event of a member vacating his seat? Now, the fact that the majority must be triumphant in all bye elections, even under the most perfectly conceived plan of proportional representation, is no objection to the principle of Mr Hare's scheme. It is an odd way of arguing against the proportional representation of minorities to say that because under certain circumstances a minority may lose some part of its fair share of representation, therefore it shall not be allowed any representation at all. When, after the general election of 1868, the minority member for the City of London, Mr Bell, died, and his place was consequently filled by a representative of the majority, many persons seemed to think it a striking illustration of the absurdity of proportional representation. It would be as sensible for a man who had lost his purse to cite the fact as an illustration of the uselessness of money. A more reasonable objection is raised in the inquiry, "Under Mr Hare's scheme, what constituency

shall a writ be issued for in the event of a member vacating his seat?"

Several answers may be given to this question. Mr Hare has himself suggested that members should still be apportioned to certain places; the locality being determined by the proportion of votes a member has polled in the place. Any member, for instance, who had obtained nine-tenths of his votes in Birmingham, would be one of the members for that town; and in case of a vacancy by his death, a new writ for the election of one member would be issued to Birmingham, and the election would be conducted in the same manner as at present. Another, and perhaps rather an Irish way of getting over the difficulty connected with filling up those accidental vacancies which occur between general elections, is not to fill them up at all; and in order to avoid constituencies remaining long unrepresented, to have triennial, or even annual parliaments. This plan would probably not affect the position of parties, as the average number of deaths on each side would be about equal; it would involve no loss to the House of Commons, which is already larger than is convenient for the conduct of business; it would induce constituencies to look out for candidates who did not go into Parliament merely for the sake of obtaining a lucrative office; and electors could also seek to protect themselves from the loss of their representative by not voting for candidates who were too weak and sickly to support the laborious duties of a member of Parliament. If this mode of getting over the difficulty were adopted, of course the vacation of a seat on the acceptance of a parliamentary office would

have to be abandoned; and it would also be necessary to shorten considerably the duration of parliaments. The chief objection to triennial and annual parliaments would be removed, if elections were conducted with order and sobriety, and if they did not entail such large expenditure on the part of candidates. If it is fair to argue from the experience of other countries, or from the recent election of the London School Board, it may be assumed that the ballot, whatever its other merits or defects may be, will prevent those disgraceful scenes of brutal and drunken excitement which now characterize elections. The adoption of the ballot before the next general election may be regarded as almost a certainty; there is also a probability that before that period the necessary expenses of elections will be borne by constituencies instead of candidates. Under these circumstances, all overwhelming objections to the short duration of parliaments would be removed; and the inconvenience arising from not filling up accidental vacancies in Parliament would be very trifling if there were a general election every one, two, or three years.

We now pass to the second of those objections to Mr Hare's scheme which we have ventured to designate as imaginary difficulties: viz. the destruction of the local character of representation. There is no reason why under this scheme all local matters which demand the attention of members of Parliament should not be as well looked after as they are at present. As previously pointed out, members might be apportioned to various localities, and the local work would then be done, as at present, by the local members. The legiti-

mate local work of members consists in assisting the progress of private bills for railways, drainage, and other public works in their constituencies, and in presenting petitions forwarded by their constituents. These services could be just as well performed under Mr Hare's scheme as at present. With regard to the progress of private bills, it may safely be assumed that the commercial element throughout the country is powerful enough to command its due influence in Parliament; and in such places as Liverpool, where the local work of the members is very important to the commercial interests of the place, the local merchants and shipowners would not be likely to forego the opportunity Mr Hare's scheme would afford them, of obtaining their full share of representatives.

The next imaginary difficulty in connection with the adoption of Mr Hare's scheme is its supposed incompatibility with the ballot. Without expressing any opinion on the merits of the ballot controversy, it may be confidently asserted that the ballot could be worked with perfect ease in conjunction with Mr Hare's scheme. It would only be necessary to have a balloting-paper instead of the voting-paper described in a previous page, and the difficulty vanishes. Any system of ballot which involves the necessity of the elector writing down the name of the candidate for whom he votes could be adapted to Mr Hare's scheme.

A more difficult task now lies before us in dealing with what may be considered the only really formidable obstacle to the practical application of Mr Hare's scheme. No completely satisfactory solution of this difficulty has as yet appeared; it is therefore desirable that the

advocates of the scheme should not disguise the existence of a serious obstacle in the way of its application. Making the difficulty known, and provoking thought and discussion on the subject, are the surest means of arriving at the wished-for solution. It has already been stated that no candidate shall be allowed to record more votes than are sufficient for his return, and that when a candidate has obtained his quota of votes, the voting or balloting-papers on which his name is the first mentioned shall be reckoned to the score of the second-named candidate. The difficulty we have alluded to is this: suppose the necessary quota of votes to be a thousand, and that two thousand voting-papers are sent in with Mr Gladstone's name first, the second name on one thousand of these voting-papers being that of Mr Jacob Bright, and second name on the other thousand being that of Sir Wilfred Lawson. In this case Mr Bright and Sir Wilfred Lawson occupy exactly similar positions: each is the second choice of a thousand electors, and yet it is possible that the one may obtain his full quota of a thousand votes, and be consequently returned, whilst the other is not able to record a single vote. For if all the voting-papers with Mr Bright's name second are used for Mr Gladstone's return, the remaining thousand will all be reckoned to Sir Wilfred Lawson. It is, of course, highly improbable that such a result would ever actually take place, as all the papers would be deposited in a balloting urn, to be opened by a responsible authority, and the votes would be recorded in the order in which they were drawn out of the urn. The appearance of all the papers would be exactly similar, and there would con-

sequently be no opportunity for the display of any unjust partiality in the opening of the papers. Still, the suspicion of the possibility of an election resulting in a manner approximating to the imaginary case just described, would do much to destroy the moral effect which might be produced by the adoption of Mr Hare's scheme. The knowledge that gross inequality is the possible result of an election would frequently lead to the supposition that it had really existed even in those cases where it was entirely absent, and the whole method of conducting elections would fall into disrepute and even contempt. It is not too much to say that some method must be contrived for removing the uncertainty about the appropriation of the second vote, before Mr Hare's plan of conducting elections could be applied in practice. It is perhaps true that there are many things in the present system of electing members of parliament which are quite as bad; for instance, no inequality can be much greater than that which allows one member to be returned by the suffrages of sixty-nine electors, whilst in another place a candidate who polls 12,684 votes is not elected; and no uncertainty can be more completely a matter of chance than that which now determines for what candidates electors shall have an opportunity of voting. The existence of worse defects in the present system of electing members of Parliament than any which would be possible under Mr Hare's scheme, ought not, however, to discourage our most strenuous efforts to seek remedies for such blemishes as that just described. People will put up with a good old historical injustice for old sake's sake, when they would indignantly repel a far more tri-

fling imperfection if they regarded it as an impudent upstart.

An American society for the promotion of proportional representation, has suggested as a solution of the difficulty concerning the appropriation of the second vote, to fix no quóta necessary for the return of a member, and to allow no second choice to the electors, but to permit each candidate to record all the votes given for him, and to regulate the voting power of members in the House according to the number of suffrages they received at the poll. According to this suggestion, a member who had received 10,000 votes would have ten times more voting power in a parliamentary division than a member who had only polled 1,000 votes. We leave the reader to consider the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal; from this or similar suggestions we may hope to arrive at the solution of the only real difficulty which besets the theoretical perfection of Mr Hare's scheme. People will probably believe in its impracticability till some modification of it has been successfully carried out, and for this reason we regard with much satisfaction the result of the late election of the London School Board. By the Education Act of 1870, it was decreed that one of the most important principles of Mr Hare's scheme should be partially adopted in the election of the London School Board. By the introduction of the cumulative vote the advantages of proportional representation were recognised; it may also be hoped that, by making the Board metropolitan and not merely local, the advantages of extending the electoral area may become more apparent; and may

ultimately lead to the conversion of London, for educational purposes, into one large constituency. However this may be, it can scarcely be doubted by any impartial person, that the London School Board compares favourably as a representative and a deliberative assembly with the members returned to Parliament by the various constituencies in London; and it may be anticipated that as electors become more thoroughly accustomed to the use of the machinery of cumulative voting, the result of the School Board elections will be more and more satisfactory. At present there is only one place which makes any audible complaint against the working of the cumulative principle for the election of the School Board. In Birmingham it is asserted that the result of the School Board election has been the reverse of representative, and that though the Liberals are in a large majority, the Conservatives have succeeded in obtaining a majority on the Board. This circumstance, which has called forth such violent denunciations of the system of proportional representation, is due solely to the remarkable electioneering tactics of the dominant party. They knew that fifteen persons had to be elected, and that under the cumulative principle an elector could give fifteen votes to one candidate; they must therefore have been aware that a minority of $\frac{1}{15}+1$ could, if they chose, absolutely secure the return of one representative, and further, that they themselves could not possibly return fifteen members unless they were certain of a united and an obedient majority of more than $\frac{14}{15}$. Notwithstanding these circumstances, and the tolerably accurate knowledge of their own strength which they

might have obtained from the result of recent parliamentary elections, they deliberately started a ticket of fifteen candidates. They then proceeded to alienate support by not including in this ticket the name of one woman or one working man. The result, as is well known, was the disastrous defeat of the League party; not, as they maintain, in consequence of the inherent defects of the cumulative vote, but because under a system of proportional representation, it is impossible for a majority of two-thirds, by any electioneering manœuvre, to exclude the remaining one-third from representation. This is what the leaders of the Birmingham Liberal party endeavoured to do. Their complete discomfiture may induce them on another occasion not to set at defiance the useful practical rule that two and two never under any combination of circumstances make five.

The successful combination of cumulative voting with the ballot during the election of the Metropolitan Board may possibly lead to so much approval of the results of proportional representation, that a demand may be made to extend the system to parliamentary elections, and to group all the boroughs in London, for representative purposes, into one large constituency. This proposal suggests the feasibility of an electoral experiment, by means of which Mr Hare's scheme could be applied to London for the purpose of returning twenty members to Parliament. It is by the means of some such contrivance that the merits of Mr Hare's scheme will probably meet with general recognition. This experiment would be advantageous in many ways; it would encounter far less opposition

than the universal application of the scheme; if unsuccessful, it would be easy to return to "the ancient ways of the Constitution;" but if, as we fully believe, it resulted in a very great improvement both in the intelligence and integrity of the constituency, and in the average merits of the members returned, it would at least be shown that the scheme was practicable, and the way might be opened for its application to the whole country. There are always a considerable number of political Thomases who will not believe a reform possible until their eyes have seen it, and their own hands handled it. With such persons one experiment, successfully carried out, will have more weight than all the political essays that ever were, or ever can be, written. We therefore hope that the experience gained in the elections of the School Boards may have the effect of reconciling the opponents of proportional representation, and may finally lead to its extension to parliamentary elections.

M. G. F.

THE END.

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